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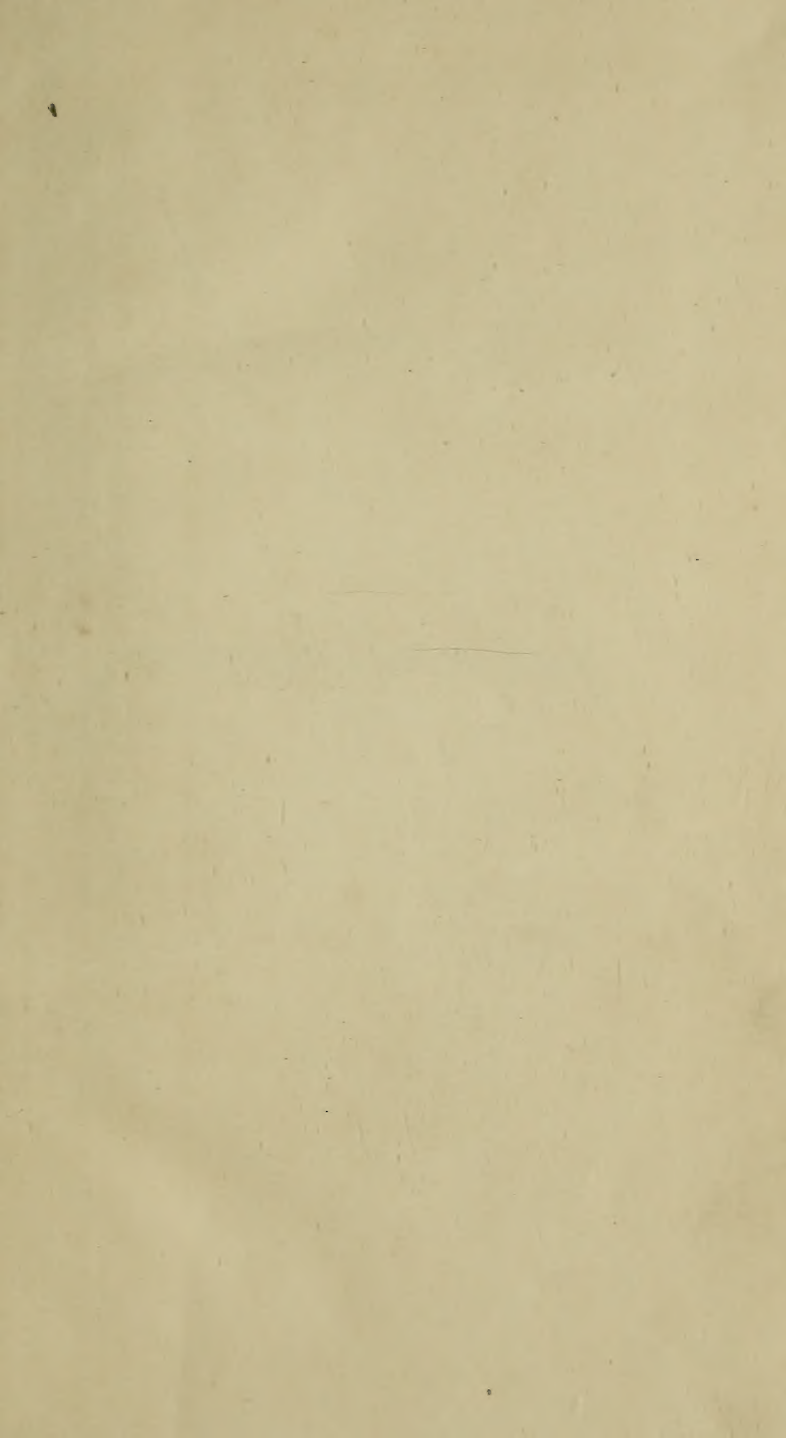
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**METHODISM IN SHEFFIELD,**

*&c. &c.*



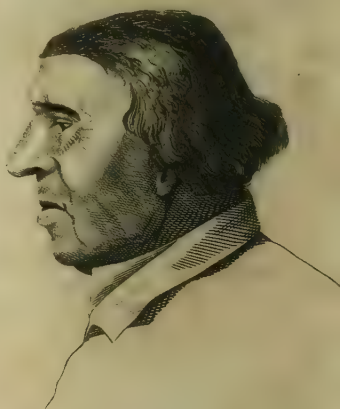




*George, Wainwright, Dore. Aged 107.*



*Born January 1714. Taken April 11<sup>th</sup> 1821.*



*Mr. W. Woodhouse, Hallam. Aged 91.  
Born 1727. taken April 10. 1821.*

*Mr. S. Birks, Thorpe. Aged 95.  
Born 1725. taken Oct 27. 1820.*

1531

L H C Winkham

1882.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM,

*IN SHEFFIELD*

AND ITS VICINITY.

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By JAMES EVERETT.

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*"Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."—HEB. x, 32.*

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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SHEFFIELD:

PRINTED BY JAMES MONTGOMERY, IRIS-OFFICE:

SOLD BY MISS GALES, SHEFFIELD; AND T. BLANCHARD,  
14, CITY-ROAD, AND 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW,  
LONDON.

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1823.

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rapid removal of all the old members, with whom, if no means are employed to secure it, a considerable portion of the early history of Methodism must die.\* Though the author of this local history never lost sight of the importance and necessity of such a work from the period when he conversed upon the subject with Mr. Kershaw, yet, like others, he permitted years to pass away without any direct attempt towards either its commencement or

\* The following is the substance of the article forwarded to the editor, dated from Bridlington, Dec. 4, 1816, and signed PAULUS:—

“Sir,—I have often thought that a topographical history of Methodism, though upon a small scale, would, on several accounts, be a very desirable thing to us as a people. It should, in my opinion, be of the following description. Where we have a chapel erected, I would propose that a record should be drawn,—1. Of the introduction of Methodism into that place, by whom, in what manner, and under what circumstances it obtained a footing there. 2. Of the origin of that chapel; or, if not the *first* chapel in that place, then of any other that may have preceded it; what circumstances of an interesting nature attended its erection, &c. with any other matter that might tend to display the mercy and providence of God. Such a history would develope to many of the present generation, and also, if carefully preserved, to future generations, much of Divine Providence; it would, if properly executed, afford a rich repast to many pious persons resident in those places, who feel a peculiar interest in the rise and spread of Methodism, and the work of God in their respective neighbourhoods, and would serve to endear to them that work, and many of those chapels. In short I conceive that several important ends would be accomplished by means of such a publication.

“I am led to transmit these observations to you, from the circumstance of my having lately met with a letter addressed to our late father in the Gospel, upon the subject of introducing Methodism into Bridlington Quay, in the county of York. It is a specimen, as far as it goes, of what I include in my idea of the proposed history. If you think this subject worth the attention of your numerous readers, and that the few observations I have made upon it merit publicity, their early insertion in your miscellany will be gratifying to your constant reader.”

On this occasion, Mr. Benson remarks,—“With this correspondent we are decidedly of opinion, that by such a history as he mentions, several important ends would be accomplished. Materials sufficient for so desirable a work may be collected from Mr. WESLEY’s early Journals;—from the information which several of the senior preachers of our connection can furnish;—and from that which may be obtained from many of the oldest leaders or private members in our societies. It is to be lamented that such a work was not projected and entered upon while many of the first race of Methodist preachers were living—men who could, from their own personal knowledge, have furnished some important matter, which cannot now be obtained, for such an undertaking. But still it is not too late to enter upon the work; nor, if it is to be done, ought there to be the least delay in procuring materials for it, as every year several of our brethren, who can furnish some, are dropping, one after another, into eternity.—We request such of our brethren in their respective circuits as are of opinion that such a history as that proposed would be useful in our connexion, to begin, as soon as possible, to collect materials.”—*METH. MAG.*, 1817, p. 222, 223.—*The Magazines consulted after the year 1810 are the One Shilling numbers, or the enlarged edition.*



completion. Being stationed in Sheffield, and unable for some months, through indisposition, to take the regular work of the circuit, he again directed his attention to the subject, and began in the month of February, 1821, to collect materials for a local history of Methodism in Sheffield and its vicinity.

Trifling as the undertaking may seem, it was not without its difficulties; but these became less formidable as the author proceeded. The *first* race of people, with the exception of the three patriarchs, whose portraits are affixed to the work, were all removed before any thing was written; and even of these three, Methodism had existed in these parts some time, before the attention of two of them was particularly directed to it. The *second* race, rather more numerous, served as a connecting link between the primitive Methodists, with whom they conversed, and the Methodists of the present day. But in both cases the author found the memory defective in many instances. This was not a little forbidding, and helps to memory became necessary. As these were employed, the vista which opened to the distance of original Methodism was streaked with a succession of rays of light, the path became more plain, and the prospect expanded as steps were taken to secure a fuller and clearer view.

The plan adopted and pursued by the writer, and which he notices as a kind of hint to any who may be disposed to succeed him, and who, through it, may be able to strike out a more excellent way, was simply this:—a blank leaf book was procured, in which to insert every thing of moment as it was obtained; not depending upon the memory for any thing, as a thought, once lost, is often for ever lost. At the close of this, a proper index was formed, for the sake of reference. But as different facts, relating to the same time, places, persons, and things, were obtained at different periods, and for which a proper portion of blank leaves could scarcely be preserved, a certain space was appropriated solely to dates, in order to expedite the arrangement of the materials afterwards. For this purpose two columns were prepared, one for the years, noticing each year in its succession down the



middle of the lines, and the other, much broader, for the pages of the book, directing the eye to the scattered facts recorded. By a reference to these, all that occurred during the year was seen at a single glance, and brought together with perfect ease when preparing a correct chronological statement. In procuring historical facts the work was more laborious than difficult. All that was necessary was, to run through the whole of Mr. WESLEY's Journals, the Methodist Magazines, the Minutes of Conference, Mr. Myles's Chronological History, together with other promising publications, and to make a memorandum of every thing connected with Sheffield and its neighbourhood. Traditional knowledge was the most desirable; and for this, the writer, by his historical researches, was partly prepared. Having the principal part of his historical inquiries recorded, he inserted on a piece of paper, opposite to the years, the names of all the preachers who had travelled in these parts. With these preparations he inquired after the oldest members of society, and of persons connected with Methodism, and visited them personally. To these he proposed different questions, and after obtaining and making a minute of all he could acquire, in a regular way, thus securing whatever was floating, so to speak, on the surface of the memory; he then adverted to his list of preachers, to Mr. WESLEY's visits to the neighbourhood, as recorded in his Journals, and to the facts noticed in the Magazines, and other books. The bare notice of these awakened other recollections, and produced interesting facts, which, but for these means, must have slumbered with the possessors in the tomb. To avoid losing any thing, and for the sake of correctness, his visits were repeated, new facts occurred, an occasional error was corrected, and his stock of knowledge was increased: always taking care to repose the greatest confidence on the most perfect memory, the clearest head, and the most established piety, not forgetting to look at any collateral evidence that made its appearance from other quarters.

Never can the writer forget some of the scenes which he has witnessed in the prosecution of his inquiries; and although always

interested with the antique, yet never was he so alive to the subject of old age as now. The reader may occasionally present to his mind a scene, more adapted to the painter and the poet, than to the historian. A cottage rises to his view, whose humble, but clean furniture, and wholesome atmosphere, are the better for religion. A strong light shines through the glass casement, and falling in a stream upon the opposite wall, illuminates the whole room. The writer on a chair, or perhaps a three-legged stool, sits in the immediate neighbourhood of an old disciple of Christ, who is himself encircled with children, children's children, and great-grand-children, each listening to the tale of "olden times," and some of the most advanced in years, confirming and illustrating the tale, by observations of the disciple's own, which were made when recollection was in her prime. The venerable Christian, who forms the most remarkable figure of the joyous group, sits in his accustomed armed chair, and looks like some of the ancient ruined strengths and castles to be found in our land. Several parts of his mind appear laid waste and decayed, but there are other parts more durable, strong, and grand, from their rising just like fragments among the ruins of the rest. In other instances, as in the case of George Wainwright, of Dore, when seen upwards of a year and half ago by the author, the reader may image to himself an old man sitting among his descendants like a connecting link between the living and the dead; a being in whom the light of existence has been already partially obscured by the encroaching shadows of death; the smile of dotage playing at intervals on his shrivelled features; the motion of his light blue eyes distinguishing his visage from that of a corpse; and then, as if some wandering spirit had animated him into a temporary resurrection, and ready to catch at any touch of association with the living world, raising his head with a cheerful look, as if he had at once, and for the first time, acquired sense to comprehend the subject of discourse, and to feel the interest excited by the presence and inquiries of a stranger, such, for the moment, being the intense operation of his mental energy upon his physical powers

and nervous system, that, notwithstanding his infirmity of deafness, each word that is spoken falls as full and distinct upon his ear, as it could have done at a more early period of his life. He again appears with his usual air of apathy, and want of interest; and every now and then, feels with his hand for something which has been laid aside, and looks round as if surprised at missing it. But even these temporary glimpses, when the mind shines forth, like the lights of heaven from behind a cloud, are moments of interest, especially when his testimony confirms what has just been advanced before by a daughter of about three score years and ten.

When the writer had proceeded a considerable way with his work, Dr. Clarke published his letter in the Methodist Magazine for April, 1821. That the Doctor intended complying with the request of Conference, in writing a Life of Mr. WESLEY, was perfectly understood by the author; but that he had particularly requested the brethren to furnish him with materials, was unknown, as he was not at the Conference, till the appearance of the letter. "I proposed to the President of the Conference," says the Doctor, "that the preachers should be requested to collect all the authentic and original anecdotes of Mr. WESLEY, and of what is called original Methodism, in their power, and to confer with as many of our aged friends as possible, in their different circuits, for what they might be able to furnish on these heads. And I requested also, that this might be done with all speed, as this source of evidence must soon be dried up by the hand of death, which had already destroyed nearly the whole of those preachers and members who had been acquainted with the Founder of our Societies, or had witnessed the introduction of Methodism into the principal towns and cities in the kingdom, to which Mr. WESLEY's attention was first providentially directed, and where many singular interpositions of the Divine hand guided and marked his apostolic labours." On reading this, the writer immediately associated the Doctor's work with his own; and, in addition to his first objects, viz. those of rescuing many important facts from oblivion, and of furnishing an example to others, he formed the resolution of putting

the MS. into the hands of Dr. C., that he might furnish himself with whatever might be suitable for his purpose. The author communicated to the latter his design, his plan, and how far he had proceeded; on which he wrote an immediate answer, part of which is, "It does not appear to me that you could have pursued a more judicious and effective plan. It is by such means alone, that the perishing originals of Methodism can be recovered and preserved. The fact relative to the old man, was within a few days of being irrecoverably lost! With all my heart, I wish you had a *travelling commission* over the whole Connexion, that you might glean up, on your present plan, every thing recoverable."

The publication of this work may appear, at first sight, prejudicial to the Doctor's Life of Mr. WESLEY, as far as its influence extends. This is a prejudice which the author is not very anxious to correct, because the serious reflection of the reader is sufficient for the purpose. All the other places touched upon by Dr. C., where Methodism has been introduced and established, save Sheffield and its vicinity, will be lost to the person who only possesses this book, and not his intended Life. The present work is local in subject, and will be local in circulation; the other is the continent, and this is the field. But there are portions of this field highly interesting to the immediate proprietor, his heirs, and domestics, which would not at all comport with the design and work of the general historian. When the general historian of the Methodist body and its Founder has taken from a mere local history what may be adapted to his purpose, a mass of interesting information will be left, relative to the small societies around; the progress of the whole; the financial affairs of the circuit; the erection and enlargement of chapels; the preachers stationed at different times in the neighbourhood; the rise and progress of Methodist Sunday Schools; notices of characters remarkable for their piety and usefulness; revivals; persecutions; providences; and a hundred other things. The general historian could not think of burthening his work with many particulars highly interesting to the neighbourhood where they are observed



to have occurred : and hence have arisen the necessity and propriety of the history of separate counties, which form interesting appendages to the History of England. This is, in Methodism, as in a national point of view, a *desideratum* ; but it is hoped the time will come, when each district, if not each circuit, shall have its separate history.

The work, however, should be commenced immediately. The present was within a short time of being lost. The old man, aged 107, was visited by the author, who was not aware that he was worse than usual, April 11, 1821, when he took his likeness, and added to his stock of information ; four days after which, the venerable worthy entered the world of spirits. Old Mr. Woodhouse was visited, April 10, the day previous to the author's engagement with George Wainwright, who was then in his usual health and spirits : in the course of the month following, May 22, he also quitted this state of mortality. Thus, as though Providence had spared them to accomplish some of its purposes, they stepped forward, their testimony was obtained, and they immediately retired ; disappeared from among men.

The names and images of the first Methodists identify themselves with the earliest remembrances of nearly the oldest living, and form part of their happiest associations. The few that now remain, are so many heir-looms handed down to us from antiquity. They are, in their connexion with Methodism, the living and almost sole remnant of our forefathers, of that hallowed generation of parents and instructors, who had given us religious existence, fostered the infancy of the second race now living, and sowed in their youthful minds the seeds of truth and piety. To the present members of Society, therefore, the offspring of the first Methodist ministry, the death of all the oldest standards, whenever it shall finally take place, will be as if the paternal roof had fallen in, and left our chambers desolate. To others than Methodists, the near and watchful observers of the body, it will be as if some towering rock, hoary with time and hardened by the tempest, some landmark



immemorial, had sunk into the earth, and changed the bearings of the whole visible horizon.

It was, as appears from the mottoes selected, both the Mosaic and Apostolic plan, to stir up the people's minds by way of remembrance, thus exciting their gratitude and inspiring them with confidence; and as the Holy Ghost has, in the Sacred Writings, pointed out the failings and perfections of the professors of religion, the author has been faithful in recording *apostacies* as well as *conversions*. It is the Christian's duty to treasure up in his memory, and to apply on proper occasions, every case, example, and singular combination of circumstances, that promise either increase of knowledge, or improvement of conduct. While he enlarges his own experience, he is careful to profit by that of others. He makes their information his own, by inquiry; and uses their faults, and the effects of them, as admonitions. He sets up their skill as a pattern, and observes their success as an incitement. He turns even his own misfortunes and defects to advantage; the former rouse him to greater caution, the latter quicken his diligence, and both increase his attention, stimulate his vigilance, and improve the direction of his conduct.

Should the vitiated taste of any connected with the body of people, part of whom are represented in the following history, so far prevail over them, as to excite a blush, when they look at Methodism in her homely russet garb, the author only has to say, that Methodism has cause to be ashamed of them. Their conduct, in such case, would be that of a rich citizen, disdaining to acknowledge his poor ancestors from the country, through whose honest industry and frugality he has actually been made what he is, in reference to wealth. Many of the first propagators of Christianity, under the Methodist name, were unquestionably rough tools, but they had rough work. They built the bridges over which their descendants walk in safety; they drained the lands which their followers now enjoy. As it regards others than the Methodists, the author was not immediately writing for them, and consequently has made it no part of his business to please them.

On the other hand, he has avoided intentionally giving offence, though he has not hesitated, when a debt of obligation stood in the way, to give to it the effect intended. But this, though not always the case, should rather excite emotions of gratitude, than painful feeling.

Where no direct reference is made to any work extant, the facts recorded have been well authenticated, by eye or ear witnesses, or the immediate descendants and connexions of the persons concerned, before they have been introduced. As the work is the *first* of the kind in Methodism, the author will consider himself amply repaid, if it only should have the tendency of directing the attention of his brethren to scenes and subjects still more interesting.

JAMES EVERETT.

SHEFFIELD, *Mar. 9, 1822.*

## METHODISM IN SHEFFIELD,

&c. &c.

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### CHAPTER I.

*An epitome of Mr. Wesley's early public Proceedings—David Taylor's arrival in Sheffield; his first reception and efforts; begins to itinerate; is rendered useful to John Bennet and others; connects himself with Mr. Ingham—John Nelson—The first Preaching-house in Sheffield.*

To persons not conversant with the religious Society, of which the present work professes to give an account, it may be necessary to advert to the personal history of the founder.

1703. The Rev. JOHN WESLEY, second son of the Rev. SAMUEL WESLEY, rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, was born June 17, O. S., 1703. In the year 1720, he entered a student in Christ Church College, Oxford, and soon after took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. September 19, 1725, he was ordained a deacon by Dr. Potter, at that time bishop of Oxford. Shortly after, he preached his first sermon at South Leigh, within two miles of Witney, in Oxfordshire. He was elected, March 17, 1726, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. November 7, 1726, he was chosen Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the Public Disputations in the Classics. On February 14, 1727, he took his degree of Master of Arts; and on September 22nd, 1728, he was, by the same bishop, ordained priest.\*

1729. It appears from the accounts given of Mr. Charles Wesley, that for more than two years before the

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\* Myles's Chronol. Hist. of Method., p. 2: see also the different Lives of Mr. WESLEY.

Society in Oxford began to assume any thing like a regular form, he had studied very hard, and through his brother's advice and influence had become deeply serious; that during the summer of 1728, he had received the sacrament weekly, and had prevailed on two or three young men to do the same; and that these gentlemen had occasionally met together for the purpose of assisting and encouraging each other in their duty, and of regulating their employments by certain rules. The systematic mode of arranging their studies and other pursuits procured them the distinguishing epithet of **METHODISTS**, which, according to Mr. Charles, was given them before his brother came to Oxford, in November 1729. This is probably the most accurate account; for when Mr. WESLEY speaks of this appellation, he mentions it only in very general terms, without attempting to state at what period of the Society it was first given. The exact regularity of their lives, as well as studies, says he, occasioned a young gentleman of Christ Church to observe, "Here is a new set of *Methodists* sprung up," alluding to some antient physicians that were so called, who flourished about thirty or forty years before the Christian era, and of whom Themison, spoken of by Juvenal, was the founder. The name was new and quaint, so it immediately took, and the Methodists were known all over the University.

1729—1733. Though these gentlemen were distinguished by this epithet, it does not appear that they met together at any fixed or stated periods, or that they had made any regulations for the purpose before Mr. JOHN WESLEY joined them. When he associated with them, they gladly committed the direction of the whole to him; from which time the Society commenced, composed of four persons — Messrs. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY, Richard Morgan, and — Kirkman. In 1733, they were joined by Mr. Benjamin Ingham, and Mr. Broughton; and also in April, the same year, by Mr. Clayton, and two or three of his pupils; nearly at the same time Mr. James Hervey, pupil to Mr. JOHN WESLEY, joined them; and shortly after, Mr. George Whitfield. These gentlemen were all collegians, and are to be considered as the *first Methodists*.

1735—1738. In the year 1735, Mr. WESLEY, for the first time, preached extempore, in All-hallows church, Lombard-street, London; but it was not till the year 1737, that he saw, that “Holiness comes by faith, and that men are justified before they are sanctified.” Animated with zeal for the honour of God and the good of souls, he set sail for Georgia in 1735; and, after having formed a small society, undergone many dangers and hardships, and been more fully instructed, by means of the Moravians, in the grand scheme of salvation, he returned to England, where he arrived in Feb. 1738. In the course of the same year, he and some Moravians formed themselves into a society, which met in Fetter-lane, London. Hitherto he had only preached in the churches; and so extremely tenacious was he in every thing relative to order, and to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church, that he, according to his own statement, “should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church.” Insisting strenuously, however, on the new doctrine (as it was then called) of salvation by faith, many, especially among the higher orders of society, were offended, and he was soon told at most of the established places of worship, “Sir, you must preach here no more.” This led the way to the erection of buildings separate from the Establishment; crowded congregations led to field-preaching; and love to souls produced itinerancy. It was not till April 2nd, 1739, that Mr. WESLEY did, in Bristol, what he had often done in a warmer climate, preached in the open air. We now behold him, like the child, who unintentionally has put in motion some powerful piece of machinery, and sees the wheels revolving, the chains clashing, cylinders rolling round him, while he himself is equally astonished at the tremendous powers which his single agency has called into action, and almost dreads the consequences which he is compelled to await, without the possibility of averting them. The clergy abandon him—persecution flames—crowds press around him for the bread of life—and God, who insensibly led him to put his hand to the work, directs the engine in its movements.



1738. While the Supreme Disposer of events was pleased to employ Mr. WESLEY in the south of the kingdom, he was engaging others in his service in the interior, to prepare the way for a fuller display of the gospel of Christ. This was particularly the case in Sheffield and its vicinity, through the instrumentality of a person of the name of David Taylor, who, when he commenced his career, had no connexion with Mr. WESLEY, and probably had not even heard of him.

David Taylor is characterised by Mr. Wm. Bennet, in the Memoir which he has written of his mother, (p. 20,) as "an itinerant preacher out of Leicestershire." Mr. Samuel Birks, of Thorp, now living, (April, 1821,) became acquainted with David Taylor in 1738, and furnished the writer, in conversation, with the following particulars:—David, he observed, had lived in the family of Lady Betty Hastings, as butler. The circumstance which first disposed him to direct his attention to personal religion, was the absence of the domestic chaplain from evening prayers. After the family had waited some time without the appearance of their spiritual guide, it was demanded by some one, "Who shall read prayers?" The reply given, was, "David Taylor." Silence, for a short space, pervaded the assembly. "Who," it was again demanded, "shall read prayers?" The same reply was reiterated from different quarters, "David Taylor." Why he was selected by general consent, it is impossible at this period to determine, but the probability is, the good opinion entertained of his general character. He took his stand, though not without considerable hesitancy and diffidence, in the desk usually assigned to the clergyman; and the very idea of assuming, though only for an occasion, so sacred an office, produced the most serious impressions upon his mind. On leaving the service of Lady Betty, he went to reside in the family of Mr. Wardlow, of Fulwood, but whether as a servant or friend, is now unknown; probably in the latter character, as he was not altogether dependant upon servitude for subsistence, having saved a little property, and from the circumstance of his frequent travels from place to place, during the week, as well as on the Lord's day, an employment seldom to be

met with in a person whose service is required at home. He soon began to pray, and give a word of exhortation, in private houses, which better accorded with the views of Mr. Wardlow, as a dissenter, than if he had dwelt in the residence of a member of the Establishment. People assembled around him in little groups, the tidings were borne to others, and public attention was attracted. One of the principal places of his early labours was Heeley, about a mile south of Sheffield, where a few serious people associated with him, who were afterwards denominated Methodists, and who may be considered as constituting the first Society belonging to the body in these parts.

Lydia Staniforth, a person who will be noticed in a future page, took great delight in relating to her children and others, from whom the writer had the circumstance, together with other particulars of early Methodism, a dream of Mrs. James Bennet's, mother of Mr. Edward Bennet. Mrs. Bennet told her that she dreamt she saw a man, describing his age, his complexion, the colour of his hair, his size, his dress, &c. who entered her house, announcing himself a preacher of the gospel. The very next day David Taylor made his appearance, exactly answering the description of her visionary visitant, and accosting her in his words. This was when David first came from Leicestershire, and very likely prior to his going to Mr. Wardlow's; and this alone secured for him a favourable reception at Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's, who stood his firm friends. Of dreams, in general, but little can be said; they are more intended for particular benefit, than for general belief, in their utility; in particular cases, however, it would neither be safe nor scriptural to reject them. In the present instance, some attention is due. Mrs. Bennet's piety preserves her from the suspicion of falsehood, and it would be acceding too much to infidelity, to suppose that Elihu was incorrect, when he said, "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed, then He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction." \*

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\* Job, xxxiii. 14—16; see also Joel, ii. 28, 29.

1738. The parents of Mr. Birks being on a visit to some relations at Heeley, received an account of those private meetings, heard David Taylor for themselves, and were so impressed in his favour, that they gave him an invitation to Thorp, about six miles north of Sheffield. On their return home, having previously fixed the day, they sent Samuel, the present Mr. Birks, who was then twelve years of age, to Heeley, with a horse for the preacher, while he himself rode on a poney. When he arrived on Sheffield-moor, he was at a loss to know where to go, being an entire stranger. It was not long, however, before the choral swell of voices, from one of the cottages, announced to him, that the inmates were engaged in the solemn exercises of devotion. "The sound," said the old gentleman, when relating the circumstance, his eyes sparkling, and his countenance brightening at the recollection of early impressions, "the sound was the most angelic I ever recollected to have heard." This may receive a solution in our own experience. The sound of several voices united by distance into one harmony, and freed from those harsh discordances which jar the ear when heard more near, is calculated to affect the coldest heart with a sense of sublimity. Charmed with the notes which poured upon his ear, and as much with a view of personal gratification as to inquire after the object of his mission, he rode up to the door; but how much was he surprised and delighted to find the very person of whom he was in quest, associated with a few pious people hymning their Maker's praise. David shortly mounted the horse, led on by his juvenile guide, and thus commenced *itinerant preacher* on a more extended scale than he was originally led to contemplate. The people in the village and neighbourhood were apprized of the object of his visit, and every preparation was made in the *barn* for their reception and accommodation. He sung, prayed, and preached, at the time appointed; and thus, probably, consecrated the very *first barn*, that is, in its connexion with Methodism, as a temple for the public worship of God. It was not long before several young men were brought under serious impressions, and held meetings in Thorp for singing and prayer; exhortation succeeded; and a

marked distinction being observed between the promoters of these meetings and the other inhabitants of the neighbourhood, something like a Society began to make its appearance,—a Society, religious in its views and feelings, and separate from the world in its practice and associations.

1739. Though Methodism in these parts, and at this period, was unknown in name, yet he who afterwards was distinguished as its founder, was not unknown as a preacher; and Mr. Samuel Birks, whose portrait accompanies this work, and whose personal history runs through the whole History of Methodism, is perhaps the only man alive who recollects having heard Mr. WESLEY preach prior to his leaving college. Mr. WESLEY was on a visit to Wentworth House, in 1733, with his father, who was then engaged with some literary work, and found it necessary to consult the library of the Marquis of Rockingham. Their stay being prolonged over the Sabbath-day, Mr. WESLEY occupied the pulpit in Wentworth church, to the no small gratification of the parishioners. What tended to excite more than usual attention was, that the preacher was a stranger, the son of a venerable clergyman of the Establishment, and had his father as a hearer. Mr. Birks was then about eight years of age, and went to church with his father, in company with a neighbour of the name of Mr. John Duke.\* The latter, on their return from public worship, was pleased to pass an encomium on the preacher, and noticed, as Mr. Birks distinctly recollected, an appropriate quotation, in the course of the sermon, from the works of Archbishop Usher. This early recollection was afterwards cherished by the public part which Mr. WESLEY acted.

Foreign as were the movements of David Taylor to the general usage of the times, yet he was not without his patrons, two of the most powerful of whom were, Mr. Wardlow already mentioned, and Mr. James Bennet, of Sheffield, husband of the good woman noticed in a preceding page. In addition to the countenance of

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\* Grandfather of Mr. J. Duke, a local preacher in the Rotherham Circuit.



these, which, at that period, was of importance, he was encouraged by the example of Mr. Benjamin Ingham, one of the six pious students expelled from the University, who began to preach out of doors, and in different private houses in the neighbourhood. Mr. Ingham afterwards joined the Moravians, and is repeatedly noticed by John Nelson\*; not unfrequently as hostile to Methodism, and declaring to his hearers, that Mr. WESLEY “preached false doctrine, and it was not safe to hear him.” With him, as yet, David Taylor seems to have had no immediate connexion.

Of the fruit of David Taylor’s ministry, that of the conversion of Mr. John Bennet is the most distinguished, not only in its character, but in its consequences. It appears from a memoir of Grace, (p. 20,) the wife of Mr. John Bennet, written by their son, and published in 1803, that this early companion of David Taylor’s was at first intended by his parents for one of the learned professions, and with that view, as is stated in his MS. Journal, received a good classical education. Being rather of a serious disposition, and partial to books, he made choice of Divinity, and about the age of seventeen was placed under the care of Dr. Latham, of Findern, near Derby, for the purpose of going through a course of academical studies. He remained there, however, but a short time; and having relinquished all thoughts of the Christian ministry, engaged himself as a justice’s clerk to R. Bagshawe, Esq., Sheffield, in which situation he continued till he was twenty-two years of age. After this he embarked in a commercial line of business, which was both a mortification and grief to his parents. Whatever might be the native seriousness of his disposition, according to the short sketch given us by his son, he was evidently taking some rapid strides toward a dissolute course of life. It appears from Mr. Birks, that at the time he was invited to hear David Taylor, he had a horse to run on Sheffield race-course. He was then in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and forming schemes of happiness, by which he

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\* Journal, pp. 44, 45, 46, 51, 53, 55, 56, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74; the edition of 1801.



would not, if even realized, have attained that object; but it pleased God to put a damp upon his mirth by blessing the word to his soul,—a display of mercy the more remarkable, as he went rather to ridicule the speaker, than to reap advantage. Struck with David's earnestness and zeal, he invited him into that part of Derbyshire called the High Peak, and travelled with him from place to place, though he thereby incurred the displeasure of his parents. Soon after this he became acquainted with Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Abberford, in this county, whom he likewise introduced into Derbyshire, and accompanied him as long as he continued preaching in those parts. He was thus the first instrument of conveying what was afterwards called Methodism, into Derbyshire and the adjoining counties; and when the Divine Being graciously revealed his Son in his heart, and visited him with a sense of his pardoning love, he immediately relinquished all secular pursuits, and devoted himself indefatigably to the work of the ministry.\*

Not at all inconsistent with the account in the preceding paragraph, is one given by Mr. Daniel Jackson, now a supernumerary preacher. "I was informed, says he, "by Moses Dale, an old local preacher, in Cheshire, that Mr. John Bennet, of Chinley, then a man of pleasure, went to run a race mare at or near Sheffield, where he heard David Taylor preach on salvation by grace through faith. Mr. Bennet believed the report, sold his mare, brought the preacher into the Peak, and afterwards became himself an active, useful preacher of the gospel; so that before circuits were regularly formed, the Peak of Derbyshire, with the adjoining parts of Cheshire and Lancashire, were called *John Bennet's round*; and in the first Methodist Conference, which was held in 1744, and composed of six clergymen and four lay-preachers, Mr. Bennet was one of the latter."†

Further than that of warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come, David Taylor seems not to have proceeded. It never once entered into his design to organize a society, and so preserve those who received

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\* Memoirs of Grace Bennet, p. 20.

† Meth. Mag. for 1817, p. 683.

good impressions under his ministry; hence, while they were exposed to the world, he himself was open to become the member of the first party that might appear, bearing the smallest affinity to his own views and feelings. The result was as might be expected; and it is thus left on record by Mr. WESLEY:—"He occasionally exhorted multitudes of people in various parts. But after that, he had taken no thought about them. So that the greater part fell asleep again."\* This testimony of Mr. WESLEY's is the result of personal inquiry when he visited Sheffield in 1742.

Among the few who were religiously impressed in the town of Sheffield, and whose impressions were permanent, were the mother and an aunt of Mrs. Green, of Rotherham. The former, it appears from a MS. diary of her own, put into my hands by her granddaughters Mrs. Bagshaw and Mrs. Chambers, of Rotherham, was filled with deep sorrow and hearty contrition for past sin, "the remembrance of which was grievous to her," in September, 1734. On receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, August, 1739, at which period she had begun to associate with the hearers of David Taylor, she expresses it as an imperious duty to record the mercy of God in giving her a "clear and lively hope of his mercy in Christ Jesus." After passing through some painful exercises, in 1740, she praises God for graciously supporting her: and from 1741 to 1751 takes occasion to insert instances both of providence and grace, as exercised towards her. She was twice married; and her daughter by her first husband, who afterwards became such a burning and shining light, was now under conviction,

1740. Ere this period, Mr. Benjamin Ingham had acquired considerable influence, and to him both David Taylor and John Bennet had attached themselves, and were now considered members of his society. Mr. Ingham writes thus from Ossett, near Wakefield:—"In Yorkshire, the Lord still keeps carrying on his work. Many souls are truly awakened; some have obtained mercy. The enemies are engaged against us, but the

Lord is our helper. We have no differences, no divisions, no disputings.”\* Though this was the year in which Mr. WESLEY finally separated from the Moravians†, it should seem that the unhappy janglings which agitated these parts, and which so often called forth the animadversions and rebukes of John Nelson, had not then commenced. A prejudice, however, was soon conceived against Mr. WESLEY, though hitherto only grounded on report, which was considerably increased on the return of John Nelson from London to his native place.

He reached Birstal, says Mr. WESLEY, “about Christmas in the year 1740. His relations and acquaintance soon began to inquire, what he thought of the new faith, (which had, by means of Mr. Ingham, occasioned much noise in Yorkshire,) and whether he believed, there was any such thing as a man’s knowing that his sins were forgiven? John told them point blank, that ‘this new faith, as they called it, was the old faith of the gospel; and that he himself was as sure his sins were forgiven, as he could be of the shining of the sun.’ This was soon noised abroad: more and more came to inquire, concerning these strange things. Some put him upon the proof of the great truths, which such inquiries naturally led him to mention. And, thus, he was brought unawares to quote, explain, compare, and enforce several parts of Scripture. This he did at first, sitting in his house, until the company increased, so that the house could not contain them. Then he stood at the door, which he was commonly obliged to do, in the evening, as soon as he came from work. God immediately set his seal to what was spoken: and several believed, and therefore declared, that God was merciful also to their unrighteousness, and had forgiven all their sins. Mr. Ingham hearing of this, came to Birstal, inquired into the facts, talked with John himself, and examined him in the closest manner, both touching his knowledge and spiritual experience. After which he encouraged him to proceed, and pressed him, as often as he had opportunity, to come to any of the places

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\* Meth. Mag. 1778. p. 183.

† Journals, vol. ii. p. 46, 8vo. ed.

where he himself had been, and speak to the people, as God should enable him. But he soon gave offence, both by his plainness of speech, and advising people to go to church and sacrament. Mr. Ingham reproved him; but finding him incorrigible, forbade any that were in his societies to hear him. But being persuaded this is the will of God concerning him, he continues to this hour (1742) working in the day, that he may be burthensome to no man, and in the evening *testifying the truth as it is in Jesus.*"\*

David Taylor, who must now be identified with Mr. Ingham's party, paid a visit to Birstal, leaving, in all probability, the serious people who had been accustomed to hear him in this neighbourhood without an instructor. Of this visit, John Nelson speaks in the following terms:—"A few days after I got home, David Taylor came to preach in our town, in Mr. Ingham's society, when I went to hear him: and a dry morsel his sermon was. Several that were acquainted with him (from whence it may be inferred that it was not his first visit,) followed me, and wanted to know how I liked the discourse. I was backward to tell them, but they pressed hard on me, and said, 'Do you not think he is as good a preacher as Mr. WESLEY?' I said, 'There is no comparison between his preaching and Mr. WESLEY's: he has not staid long enough in the large room at Jerusalem.' After they had been gone some time, they came again to ask what I meant? I said, 'He is not endued with power from on high.' They went and related to him what I said; and he told me since, that if I had been present, he could have stabbed me; yet he could not rest till he went to hear Mr. WESLEY at London. Then he found what I said was true; and he came down to Sheffield, and into Derbyshire, preaching, what he called, Mr. WESLEY's doctrine, and awakened and converted many scores of people, till the Germans got to him and made him deny the law of God: then he became again as salt without savour."† From this, it should seem, that David had not, till some

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\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 149.

† Ibid. p. 45, 46.



time after this period, possessed the proper spirit of the gospel, and had been but partially useful.

1741. On his return from London, he directed his attention to the first scene of his labours. His preaching attracted public notice; and it is not improbable, that this is the circumstance referred to by Mr. Hunter, where he says, "The Wesleyan Methodists were first received into Sheffield in the year 1741, by Mr. Edward Bennet, a sugar-baker. He built for them a chapel in Pinstone-lane, which was demolished in a riot on the 25th of May, 1743." \* This chapel was not immediately in Pinstone-lane, but in that part of Cheney-square bordering upon it. The erection of the building confirms the truth of John Nelson's remark relative to the success of David's preaching, the crowds who heard and profited rendering such erection necessary.

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\* History of Sheffield and Hallamshire, p. 171.



## CHAP. II.

*John Nelson's first visit to Sheffield—The village of Thorp—William Green becomes serious—An extraordinary account of the conversion of John Thorpe—David Taylor visits Derbyshire; is benighted on the Moors; his success in the Peak—William and Alice Brammah; and others of the first members of the Society in Sheffield—Mr. Wesley's first visit to Sheffield, and interview with David Taylor—An out-pouring of the Spirit at Barley-Hall—Conviction for sin mistaken for insanity—David Taylor declines in zeal—John Bennet's increasing usefulness—The conversion of Miss Holmes.*

1741. WHILE David Taylor was labouring with all his might, under the name of a Methodist, John Nelson came into the neighbourhood to assist him. So early as this, Mr. Birks recollects hearing the latter preach in his father's house at Thorp. Before he placed his second foot within the door-way, he pronounced his usual salutation, "Peace be to this house, and all that dwell herein." Among the first who became decidedly serious at Thorp, was Mr. Wm. Green, who afterwards went to Sheffield, and finally settled at Rotherham. As frequent reference will be made to him in subsequent parts of the history, a brief notice shall here suffice. He was born at Pibley-lane, near Mansfield, when his mother was on a visit to that place, 1717. His youthful days were spent at Tankersley, near Thorncliffe. He taught a school in Thorp, became a useful leader and local preacher, and was the husband of that saint of God, Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, who was cousin to Mr. Holmes, of Sike House, a favorite resort of Mr. WESLEY's. Mrs. Booth, of Brushes, too, a good woman, mother of Mr. Booth, whose burial and tomb, near the mansion, reflects so little honour on his Christianity, was one of David Taylor's constant hearers at Thorp. Her husband sometimes accompanied her, and was not without occasional serious impressions. Another

person who attended preaching there about this period was, the father of the present Rev. Wm. Thorpe, of Bristol, who may be considered as springing from a Methodist stock, and who himself, it is said, met in class some time in Rotherham. Mr. Birks observed to the writer, that John Thorpe was then a young man, and in the capacity of a journeyman shoemaker to the clerk of Wentworth Church; that he frequently attended preaching at his father's house, in company with other young men, to sport with religion and the preacher; and that his first serious impressions were received at Thorp. The case of his conversion, as detailed, under the title of "Anecdotes of the Rev. John Thorpe, of Masbrough, near Rotherham, Yorkshire," by an anonymous writer, in the Methodist Magazine\*, is strikingly singular.

"The town of Rotherham," it is remarked, "and its environs, had, for a considerable time, been ranked by serious people, among those parts in Yorkshire, which were least inclined to favour the spread of evangelical religion; and when Messrs. WHITFIELD and WESLEY, and others, attempted to disseminate Divine knowledge in that neighbourhood, their persons and message were treated in general with the greatest contempt. The propagation of malicious falsehoods was encouraged, with design to counteract the good effects of their ministry. Mr. Thorpe ranged under the standard of their most virulent opposers; and not content with personal insult, added private ridicule to public interruption. Ale-houses became theatres, where the fate of religious opinion was to be determined.

"It was at one of these convivial resorts, that Mr. Thorpe and three of his associates, to enliven the company, undertook to mimic the Methodist preachers. The proposition was highly gratifying to all the parties present, and a wager agreed upon, to inspire each individual with a desire of excelling in this impious attempt. That their jovial auditors might adjudge the prize to the most adroit performer, it was concluded that each

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\* See year 1794, pp. 311, 312, 313.

should open the Bible, and hold forth from the first text that should present itself to the eye. Accordingly three in their turn mounted the table, and entertained their wicked companions at the expense of every thing sacred. When they had exhausted their little stock of buffoonery, it devolved on Mr. Thorpe to close this very irreverent scene. Much elated, and confident of success, he exclaimed as he ascended the table, 'I shall beat you all!'

"When the Bible was handed to him, he had not the slightest preconception of what part of Scripture he should make the subject of his banter. However, by the guidance of Providence, it opened at that remarkable passage, Luke xiii. 3, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' No sooner had he uttered the words, than his mind was affected in a very extraordinary manner. The sharpest pangs of conviction now seized him, and conscience denounced tremendous vengeance upon his soul. In a moment, he had a clear view of his subject, and divided his discourse more like a divine, who had been accustomed to speak on portions of Scripture, than one who never so much as thought on religious topics, except for the purpose of ridicule! He found no deficiency of matter, nor want of utterance, and he has often declared, 'If ever I preached in my life, by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time.' The impression that the subject made upon his own mind, had such an effect upon his manner, that the most ignorant and profane could not but perceive that what he had spoken was with the greatest sincerity.

"The unexpected solemnity and pertinency of his address, instead of entertaining the company, first spread a visible depression, and afterwards a sudden gloom, upon every countenance. The sudden change in the complexion of his associates did not a little conduce to increase the convictions of his own bosom. No individual appeared disposed to interrupt him; but, on the contrary, their attention was deeply engaged with the pointedness of his remarks; yea, many of his sentences, made, to his own apprehension, his hair stand erect!

"When he left the table, not a syllable was uttered concerning the wager, but a profound silence pervaded the company. Mr. Thorpe immediately withdrew,

without taking the least notice of any one present, and returned home with very painful reflections, and in the deepest distress. Happily for him, this was the last bacchanalian revel: his impressions were manifestly genuine; and from that period, the connexion between him and his former companions was entirely dissolved. Thus, by Divine grace, 'the prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive was delivered!' The people whom he had before so frequently reviled, became now the objects of his delight. He sought their company with avidity; and, soon after, was joined to Mr. WESLEY's society. He continued more than two years in a disconsolate and desponding state; but that God who comforteth those that are cast down, was pleased, after he had showed him great and sore troubles, to take off his sackcloth, and gird him with gladness. His habitual seriousness and uniform morality soon endeared him to his new connexions, and he was appointed by Mr. WESLEY to preach the faith he once attempted to destroy. His abilities were generally considered to be above mediocrity; and in his itinerant labours he was both acceptable and successful wherever he went.

"When Mr. Thorpe had preached above two years, he was uncommonly harassed with temptations to atheism. These continued, a few intervals excepted, many months. His distress sometimes upon this account was so great as to embarrass his mind beyond description. At length, however, he was happily delivered by the following occurrence. Passing through a wood, with a design to preach in a neighbouring village, while he was swinging his hand, a leaf accidentally stuck between his fingers. He instantly felt a powerful impression on his mind to examine the texture of the leaf. Holding it between his eye and the sun, and reflecting upon its exquisitely curious and wonderful formation, he was led into an extensive contemplation on the works of creation. Tracing these back to their first cause, he had in a moment such a conviction of the existence and ineffable perfections of God, which then appeared in every spire of grass, that his distress was immediately removed, and he prosecuted his journey, rejoicing in



God, and admiring him in every object that presented itself to his view."

The substance of this account is noticed also by Mr. Southey, in his *Life of Mr. WESLEY*, vol. ii. p. 85; but in no one of the relations published, is the date of the event recorded. It is placed here, because of its immediate connexion with Thorpe at the time, as a hearer of the Methodist preachers. Instead of coming from Wentworth to Thorp, to make merry with sacred things, he regularly attended for profit to his soul, and soon began to assist in the prayer meetings. That he began to preach at a very early period appears also evident, for Mr. T. Scales, who was born in 1733, heard him preach in 1745, at which period he was a regular local preacher, and was accustomed to go from Rotherham to Cudworth, a place north of Barnsley, to preach. To young Scales he was rendered useful.\*

As active agents increased, the work of God, now generally designated by the name of Methodism, extended. David Taylor, whose ministry had been so successful in Sheffield, began to think of the people in Derbyshire, to whom he had preached when he was less zealously affected in the cause in which he was engaged. In one of his excursions over the moors, he was benighted a few miles beyond Bradfield Dale. Part of the old house is yet standing, on the edge of the moors, to which he was first directed by a glimmering light from the fire within. He solicited admission, which was no sooner gained, than he began to talk to them respecting their souls, the aggravating nature of moral evil, and the final doom of the wicked. The people, unaccustomed to think on such subjects, and his zeal, so perfectly novel in those times, probably making no very favourable impression upon their minds relative to his sanity, requested him to leave the house. Like the Gadarenes, who prayed Jesus to depart out of their coasts, 'they were afraid.' To hasten the departure of their unwelcome guest, the cottagers told David, that they had no convenience for him; and the more effectually to secure it, one of them slipped off to Woodseats,

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\* Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 126.



a farm-house, to procure lodgings. Having succeeded in this, David was soon comfortably seated beneath a more hospitable roof. He informed the inmates who he was, and told them that if they would invite their neighbours, and grant him permission, he would preach to them in the morning, which was accordingly done.

It was, in all probability, on one of those journeys across the wilds, that Mrs. Amy Taylor, of Banmoor, Peak Forest, grandmother of the late Mrs. Thomas Pindar, 'discovered the value of her soul, the danger to which sin exposed it, and the way of salvation through faith;' for it was under David's ministry that she was brought to God.\* This place, Banmoor, is a solitary farm, remote from any village or public road, two miles from Chapel-en-le-Frith. It was important in the early days of Methodism, being the mother-church of several large and flourishing societies in the neighbouring towns and villages. Of this number were Eyam, Stony-Middleton, Castleton, Grindleford-Bridge, and several other places†, all of which will, in the course of the work, receive every attention that authentic information will warrant.

Bongs, in the parish of Mellor, was another of those places in the Peak of Derbyshire, which may dispute the precedency with Banmoor, in the reception of the gospel from David Taylor. Under a sermon preached by David, Mr. Turner, of Bongs, and two of his daughters, were convinced of their moral depravity and actual rebellion against God. The father soon found peace, and appears to have been a man of fervent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of man. This induced him to open his doors to the messengers of grace, at a time when both life and property were in danger through the violence of persecution. On one occasion, during these persecutions of the friends and ministers of Christ, he, having heard that John Nelson was impressed for the sake of Christ and his gospel, rode from Bongs, near Stockport, to York, to see him, converse with him, and encourage him; and, as long as he lived, he continued the preaching in his own house, counting it an honour

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\* Meth. Mag. 1807, p. 353.

† Ibid, 1816, p. 161, 162.

to receive the preachers under his friendly roof. His daughter Ann, who was born in 1725, and was only about fifteen years of age when the same sermon proved beneficial to three of the family, walked in uprightness of heart and life before God seventy-six years, and, like a shock of corn fully ripe for the heavenly garner, entered into rest, 1816, in the 91st or 92nd year of her age.\*

A proper place being appropriated to the public worship of God in Sheffield, and stated periods for Divine service established, the people who embraced Methodism were in less danger of being scattered during the absence of David Taylor than formerly, while their frequent attendance upon the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Dodge, curate of Ecclesall Chapel, was the means of preserving the life of God in their souls. He was a truly pious character, and frequently wept over his auditors while enforcing the great truths of the gospel. His fidelity in the discharge of his duties as a Christian minister, and the visible attachment which he manifested to the Methodists, procured him many enemies both in Sheffield, where he occasionally preached, and in the neighbourhood, among the less devout members of the Establishment. In addition to the countenance which he gave to them, there was in the primitive Methodists a strong predilection in favour of the Church of England, which was cherished by Mr. WESLEY and his co-adjutors in the work, and which rendered it no way difficult for them to attend its service. Taste and discrimination accompanied their conversion to God: they had been taught to distinguish between the chaff and the wheat, and were almost led, by the instinctive suggestions of their new nature, to go to those places where they could obtain suitable food for their hungry souls. Hence several were in the habit of going from Sheffield to Ecclesall to hear Mr. Dodge. Among the foremost and most constant of these, were William and Alice Brammah, two characters extensively known in Methodism. Old Mr. Woodhouse, of Hallam, another of the persons whose portrait accompanies this volume, and one of the living records consulted on the subject of ori-

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\* Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 683, 684, 685, 686, 687.

ginal Methodism, as here represented, had a perfect recollection, though he knew nothing of experimental religion at the time, and was but a boy about fourteen years of age, of this good man and his wife being the sport of the rude whenever they visited Ecclesall Chapel, and of evincing something in their deportment differing from others in point of sanctity. "Here are the Methodists coming!" was the general shout of the profligate on seeing them, who watched their approach.

What secured David Taylor more than an usual share of popularity was, his preaching sometimes out of doors. Sheffield-moor was his usual place of resort on these occasions. It was there that Lydia Staniforth, one of the first members of the Society, heard him. His discourse was a kind of exposition of the Lord's Prayer. She was partially enlightened through his instrumentality; and her light and convictions were increased by the perusal of a short treatise on the "New Birth." Her husband, to whom she unbosomed her mind, concluded that, in their case, it was perfectly unnecessary, as they attended church, and lived creditably in the eyes of the world. "Besides," said he, "if we are not right, what will become of numbers more?" This was every way satisfactory to Luke, (for that was his Christian name,) till, attracted by the singing, he was led to hear for himself, got converted to God, and became, with his good wife, a credit and support to the Methodist Society.

Though Mr. James Bennet was kind in his attentions to David Taylor, it does not appear that the other preachers who visited Sheffield, were regularly entertained by him. So early as before the erection of the preaching-house, they were kindly lodged by Mr. Henry Smith, who was one of the first Methodists, father of Mr. Samuel Smith, who afterwards became an itinerant preacher, and grandfather of the present Mr. Henry Smith, Philadelphia, near the Infirmary. Old Henry Smith was a man of God.

1742. Mr. WESLEY, whose way was well prepared in these parts, visited Sheffield June 14, 1742, which is the first notice of the town and neighbourhood in his Journals. "Having," says he, "a great desire to see David Taylor, whom God had made an instrument of

good to many souls, I rode to Sheffield; but not finding him there, I was minded to go forward immediately. However, the importunity of the people constrained me to stay, and preach both in the evening and in the morning. Tuesday, the 15th, he came.”\* Then follows what has been already remarked; David’s neglect of the people in not attending to them after they were awakened. Mr. WESLEY preached in the evening on the inward kingdom of God; and in the morning, Wednesday, the 16th, on the spirit of fear and the spirit of adoption. “It was now first,” he observes, “I felt that God was here also.”

He rode to Barley Hall, about six miles from hence, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Thorp, where he preached in the afternoon. There he was received as an angel of the Lord by Mr. Johnson’s pious family, some of whom were the first-fruits of Methodist zeal, and experienced a deeper sense of the presence of God than even at Sheffield. Many, while he was preaching, were melted down and filled with love toward Him whom “God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.” “I talked with one here,” says he, “who for about six months (from the hour she knew the pardoning love of God) has been all peace and love. She rejoices evermore, and prays without ceasing. God gives her whatever petitions she asks of Him, and enables her in every thing to give thanks. She has the witness in herself, that whatever she does, it is all done to the glory of God. Her heart never wanders from Him; no, not for a moment, but is continually before the Throne; yet whether she was sanctified throughout or not, I had not light to determine.”†

Incessant in his pulpit and other exertions, he preached at five o’clock the next morning, on the righteousness of faith. But he had not half finished his discourse, when he was constrained to break off from preaching; his own and the hearts of the people were so filled with a sense of the love of God, and their mouths with prayer and thanksgiving. “When,” says he, “we were somewhat satisfied herewith, I went on to call sinners to the

\* Vol. ii. p. 158 8vo. edit. connected with his works.

† This, I have been informed, was Mrs. Johnson’s daughter.





J. Waverett Del.

BARBERY HALL, NEAR THURF.





salvation ready to be revealed. The same blessing from God was found in the evening while I was shewing how He justifies the ungodly. Among the hearers was one, who, some time previous to this, had been deeply convinced of her ungodliness, insomuch that she cried out, day and night, 'Lord, save, or I perish.' All the neighbours agreeing that she was deranged, her husband put her under the care of a physician, who bled her largely, gave her a powerful emetic, and laid on several blisters. But all this proving unsuccessful, she was in a short time pronounced incurable. He thought, however, he would speak to one person more, who had done much good in the neighbourhood. When Mrs. Johnson visited her, she soon discovered the nature of her complaint, having herself experienced the same. She ordered all the medicines to be thrown away, and exhorted the patient to *look unto Jesus*, which she was enabled to do by faith, during the evening service. Thus was the broken in heart healed." Mr. WESLEY left Barley Hall on the Friday, passed through Sheffield, and prosecuted the remainder of his journey.\*

Prior to this visit of Mr. WESLEY's, David Taylor had been flagging in his zeal, through the influence of Mr. Ingham's opinions: but Mr. W. says, "When I talked with him at Sheffield, he was thoroughly sensible of his mistake."† The flame of love which was kindled in his bosom in London, only burnt about twelve months; and although the dying embers were again re-animated, it was only a flickering blaze which served a still shorter time, and then expired; for he was again drawn into *German stillness* by Mr. Simpson, a person in connexion with Mr. Ingham.‡

It was during this journey, that John Bennet, who was still connected with the Moravians, under Mr. Ingham, first heard Mr. WESLEY preach at Dewsbury; and was introduced into his company by John Nelson, at Mirfield, in that neighbourhood. || An intimacy between John Bennet and John Nelson had taken place,

\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 158, 159.  
 memoir of Grace Bennet, p. 21.

† Ibid. p. 226.

‡ Ibid.

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which was here increased; and such an auxiliary was the more opportune and important, in consequence of David Taylor's growing apathy. David, however, continued to itinerate, and occasionally met with his old friends. One of the first of those meetings is described by John Nelson. "I was desired once more," he remarks, "to go to Gomersal Field-head, to speak with Mr. Ingham. When I got there, David Taylor was with him in the parlour, and spoke kindly to me; but when Mr. Taylor was gone, he began to talk to me about making division among the Brethren. I told him, I did not want to make division; I wanted the people to be saved. But he said, 'We cannot receive you or Mr. WESLEY into our community, till he publicly declares he has printed false doctrine, and you declare you have preached false.' I said, 'Wherein?' He then burst out into laughter, and said, 'In telling the people that they may live without committing sin.'"<sup>\*</sup> This is noticed with a view to shew one of the grand points of difference between Mr. Ingham's society and the original Methodists, and that David Taylor still respected John Nelson, which respect was some restraint upon Mr. Ingham while he continued in the room. But it was not long before David's change of sentiment produced very opposite feelings to those of kindness. "When Mr. Bennet and I went to Stanedge," says John Nelson, "we met David Taylor, who had got so much into the poor sinnership, that he would scarcely speak to me; he called Mr. Bennet to a distance, and said, he was sorry that he was going to take me into Derbyshire, for I was so full of law and reason, that I should do a great deal of harm wherever I preached."<sup>†</sup> Stanedge lies to the west of Fulwood, about eight miles from Sheffield.

In thus noticing the oral controversies between the first Methodist preachers in this neighbourhood and the Moravians, the writer desires it to be distinctly understood, that he takes no share in them in point of personal feeling, and that he only introduces the subject as far as it is connected with the progress of Methodism in

<sup>\*</sup> Journal, p. 68.

<sup>†</sup> Ibid. pp. 77, 78.

these parts. There was a great deal of severity of expression employed, which must have originated in irritation of mind. John Nelson, in the warmth of his zeal, might talk about "German stillness," which conveys the notion of paralyzed exertion, but which might denote no more than what is really visible in our own body, in the difference which exists between one whom we denominate a "lively, zealous man," and a preacher of perhaps equal piety, and as substantially and permanently useful, but of more sober feeling. That German stillness denoted inactivity, or perfect quietism, cannot for a moment be admitted, either in reference to Mr. Ingham or the other Moravians noticed, who were supposed to be infected with it, because they are represented by those who prefer the charge, as travelling from place to place to preach the gospel; and even John Nelson himself "desired to die, rather than live, to see the children devoured by these boars out of the German wood,"\*—an expression, by-the-bye, which, while it would be unjustifiable to tolerate it, proves that they possessed a zealous spirit of proselytism. Equal allowance must be made, too, in reference to the word "sinnership," which a pious Moravian would shudder to interpret as advocating the unrestrained dominion of sin over the heart and life; but would rather construe it into that deep self-abasement of spirit, which every pious man feels when he reflects on his unworthiness and unprofitableness before unsullied Majesty, never forgetting his sins, though a subject of Divine grace. With *our* comments on these terms, they might be rendered very objectionable; but a Moravian would give a very different turn to the whole. That there were differences of opinion, and very often no more than individual opinion, is but too certain. This, however, has always been the case; and to suppose that men will be brought to think alike, is as extravagant a notion, as the experiment of the Emperor Charles V. was ridiculous, who brought a multitude of clocks and watches together, with a view to make them keep exact time with each other. To have

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\* Journal, p. 58.



brought these machines so near together, as to answer all the useful purposes of life, was laudable; an attempt to go further was an act of vain and fruitless curiosity. Neither Methodists nor Moravians would feel disposed to unchristianize Peter, because Paul had to withstand him to the face,—to say that Paul and Barnabas were not good men, because there was a sharp contention between them,—or that Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield were destitute of grace, because they differed in opinion. Methodism is deeply indebted to Moravianism, and it will admit of a doubt, whether it would ever have been what it is, had it not been for the instructions which Mr. WESLEY, under God, received from the Moravians; and the grant made from our Missionary fund to the Moravian missions, when the latter were labouring under great pecuniary difficulties, through the late dreadful struggle on the continent of Europe, is an evidence of a more liberal spirit than was often indulged at the period to which this part of the history refers, when hard names were not uncommon, and conscientious differences existed. They are not general terms or general censures, that will admit us into the niceties of religious controversy; nor are we to attribute to the separate bodies what is only applicable to a few individuals.

John Bennet had been rendered useful in Derbyshire prior to this period, and was apparently conducting John Nelson thither to give additional weight to the truths which he had delivered. The late Mr. John Marsden, of London, who was born at Chelmorton, in Derbyshire, September 1721, was awakened under the preaching of Mr. Bennet. A person of the name of Thomas Bennett, an inhabitant of the village of Chelmorton, and a pious man, applied to Mr. Marsden to desire his father to permit a Methodist preacher to preach in his barn, saying, “When I was a young man, the Puritans\* came and preached at Town-end, (the principal house in the village,) and the people were

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\* This name was given by way of reproach to the Dissenters in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from their attempting a *pure* form of worship and discipline than had yet been *established*. It was afterwards frequently applied to the Non-conformists in the time of Charles the Second. —See *Neal's Hist. of the Puritans*.



much affected under them. There is a man called John Bennet, who preaches just in the same way, and the people are affected under him in the same manner; and if you will procure your father's barn, I will invite him." This request being acceded to, John Bennet went to the place and preached. Under his first sermon, Mr. Marsden, who was then little more than twenty years of age, together with his brothers, were convinced of their guilt and depravity. These young men, with Mr. Lomas, (son-in-law to Mr. Thomas Bennett, who had borrowed the barn, and grandfather to the late Mr. Robert Lomas, an itinerant preacher,) immediately began to search the Scriptures, to see "whether what John Bennet had said was true." By this inquiry, they became still more deeply affected with the conviction that they were fallen, condemned sinners; and never rested till they experienced redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. This blessed consciousness of the favour of God, Mr. John Marsden appears to have, in general, enjoyed to the period of his dissolution, which took place in the 80th year of his age, after an union of more than half a century with the Methodists. One of his daughters is the wife of Mr. James Townley, an itinerant preacher. Mr. Marsden was the eldest but one of four brothers, viz. Richard, John, William, and George, all of whom are gone to their great reward, after having adorned the gospel for many years in union with the Methodist body.\* Mr. William Marsden, father of the present Mr. George Marsden, President of the Manchester Conference in 1821, died in 1801, in the 75th year of his age. Mr. Bradburn preached his funeral sermon in Oldham-street Chapel, Manchester, in which he has furnished some account of the other brothers.† We may consider this family as indebted to John Bennet, under God, for their religion; and the day of God alone will reveal the full extent of his usefulness.

Both the instability and usefulness of David Taylor had, in a certain religious circle, attracted considerable

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\* Meth. Mag. 1808, pp. 32, 33.

† Meth. Mag. 1802, pp. 184, 242; see also Mag. 1808, p. 80.

notice. The Countess of Huntingdon, in a letter to Mr. WESLEY, observes, "Your opinion of David Taylor will, I fear, be found true. I think it will be best to take no notice till I find a way open to do it effectually. When we lose our plainness, there ends the Christian. A double-minded man who can bear? I have enclosed you Mr. S.'s conversation; he has left the Moravians, as he tells me, and is not quite at rest now. I have no doubt but he (Mr. S. I suppose,) will be brought right at last."\* About two months after this, she again remarks, addressing Mr. WESLEY, "John Taylor is gone to be an assistant to David Taylor, and if it can be brought about, to become a school-master among those people who are awakened."† Both of these letters were written in the early part of this year, and shew the state into which he had relapsed previous to Mr. WESLEY's conversation with him; and his state soon after, shews that the infant society in Sheffield had not much to expect from him. The few, however, who were now united in church fellowship, were not entirely dependant upon his exertions. They were occasionally supplied with preachers sent by Mr. WESLEY; and they held prayer-meetings among themselves.

One of the brightest ornaments recorded in the annals of Methodism, already named, the late Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, who was a member of the Methodist Society in Sheffield, when it did not exceed a dozen persons, began now to occupy a prominent place in the religious part of the community. The greater part of the facts relative to this pious female, many of which were closely connected with the early history of Methodism in these parts, were communicated to the Rev. James Wood, who received them with a view to publish, but unfortunately lost them in the neighbourhood of Bristol, when going into the country part of the circuit. An original document or two, in her own hand-writing, from which copies were taken, has fortunately survived the wreck; and as no separate account has been published of her, nor any at this remote period likely to appear, the present opportunity is embraced of entering

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\* Ibid. 1798, p. 490.      † Ibid. p. 642.

more into detail than otherwise comports with the design and nature of a brief history like the present. To suffer so much genuine worth to drop into the dust without greater publicity than has hitherto been given to it, would be to deprive the grace of God of due honour, and the church of a proper share of religious instruction.

She was born in April, in the year 1723. Her maiden name was Jane Holmes. Her father died when she was five years of age, and her mother, who was a moral character, restrained her from every thing she deemed sinful, and taught her according to the best light she possessed. Her principal delight, when a child, was not in amusement and finery, but in committing to memory sacred subjects. Once, at the age of nine, she was remarkably impressed in reading the account of the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai; a sacred awe rested upon her spirits; she wept, and her mother, knowing the cause, pressed her to her bosom, saying, she hoped it was a spark of grace which God had lit up in her soul. On her mother's second marriage, which was about the sixth year of her widowhood, and the eleventh of her daughter's age, she was sent to the dancing-school, an amusement perfectly innocent to a mere moralist. This exposed her to gay, thoughtless company, and she soon lost that tone of serious feeling which had hitherto possessed her soul. Instead of looking into her "Book of Prayers for all occasions," with which she was provided, three times in the day, she now satisfied herself with twice. She still retained some tenderness of conscience, continued to repeat her prayers morning and evening, was confirmed by the Bishop, and, at a suitable age, though with great fear, was taken by her mother to receive, once a month, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the latter ordinance, neither of them were able to discern fully the Lord's body. Not aware of the evil of it, she was taught to play at cards at the age of seventeen. She was at this period rather in a delicate state of health; and her father-in-law, who commonly attended the horse-races, which, thank God! have long been given up, would have her to take a ride to them for the good of her health: and

with a view to elevate her spirits, her mother united with her medical attendant in recommending to her notice the performance of an "*innocent comedy*." When she related to her mother what she had seen at the theatre, it was agreed that she should attend no more. It was at this critical period, when she was about to be given up to the world, that her aunt Bayley was converted to God, and began, in private conversation, to preach to her the doctrine of the *new-birth*. This was in David Taylor's time, and prior to the erection of the chapel by Mr. Edward Bennet.

When the first Methodist preacher entered Sheffield, her aunt, fully prepared to receive him, gave him her countenance and support. David Taylor was known, and had confined his labours chiefly within doors. But here was a stranger,—a man who took his stand in the most public streets of the town,—a man who was still more strenuous than even David Taylor, in insisting on, "Ye must be born again;" for till David went to London, he was a mere novice in the Christian faith. The people took alarm; a new religion was, in their estimation, springing up, and the Church was in danger. It was during this state of general feeling, that Mrs. Bayley invited her sister and her niece to hear a Methodist sermon. Though they complied with the invitation, it was not without painful apprehensions of either being turned aside from the Church, or of offending the clergy with whom they were intimately acquainted. As the invitation extended to a social visit as well as to preaching, they attended in due time. The preacher was present, with a few serious people. They sung several hymns, in which they engaged with considerable devotional feeling, and seemed much delighted with each other's society. Miss Holmes perceived, that they possessed a something which constituted their felicity, of which she was destitute; and the conversation turning on the conversion of the heart to God, she desired that she might experience the same, and attended preaching in the evening with a mixture of joy and grief.

Soon after this, she was sent from home to finish her education; and before she returned, she heard that her mother had connected herself with the Methodists, and



was in a state of mental derangement. On her arrival at home, which was in the course of the next summer, she was surprized to find her mother perfectly sane. In the mean time one of the clergymen, at the request of her father-in-law, preached no less than four sermons against the Methodists, shewing the danger of leaving the Church, and the wickedness of encouraging those wolves in sheep's clothing, the preachers. Her mother having become decidedly serious, and herself on her preferment, she was scarcely so agreeable at home, from a slight inclination to gaiety, as formerly. She still, however, was not without serious thought and good desires, though terribly afraid, if she should attend preaching, that she should be branded with the appellation of Methodist. A report was in circulation, that Mr. CHARLES WESLEY would preach, which greatly pleased her, under an impression, that, as he was a clergyman, less shame would be attached to an attendance on his ministry; but when she arrived at the place, the preacher proved to be another person. In the course of his sermon, he extolled the Established Church, and took occasion to vindicate his doctrines by an appeal to its Liturgy, Homilies, and Articles,—a practice much in use in early Methodism, and absolutely necessary to ward off the aspersions of some of the clergy. At the close of his discourse, he took occasion to shew, that the Church of England would avail but little, unless its members, and especially his hearers, were born again, and he laid down the various marks of the new birth. These marks, his young hearer found, were not altogether characteristic of her state. She nevertheless was more fully convinced of the wickedness and hardness of the heart; and, in a conversation with the preacher, who told her that she must first feel her need of a Saviour before she could find mercy, and that he knew a female, who, after she was convinced of sin, declared that she would neither eat nor drink till she had experienced the pardoning love of God, her mind was still less at rest. She thought the person extremely wicked to form such a resolution, as she ran the hazard of starvation, and was not a little offended at the preacher, wishing herself out of his presence. He would not suffer her to depart without prayer; and, elevating his



voice to no ordinary pitch, he still became the more offensive to her. But the Spirit of God was at work; she soon was in an agony of soul; and her mother, who never had seen any person in such deep distress of mind, told the preacher her state a few days afterwards. He said, he trusted to see many more as bad as she; her mother, on the other hand, hoped never to see another. He told her to inform her daughter, that Jesus Christ was pleading for her at the right hand of the Majesty on high. When her mother attempted to encourage her with the reflection, she immediately asked, as if the enemy of her soul had spoken within her, for the twofold purpose of tormenting the one and depriving the other of comfort, "How does he know Christ is interceding for me? Has he been in heaven to see?" A person who was going to preaching, called upon her mother, and, seeing the daughter in such a state, proposed to sing one of the hymns for 'Mourners,' and pray; but neither prayer nor praise afforded delight. She felt shut up in unbelief, and was tempted to indulge hard thoughts against her mother for bringing her into that state, by wishing her to attend the Methodist ministry. On retiring to rest, the servant who had prepared the bed, said, "You are very ill; I never saw you look so ill before." "Oh," she replied, "it is this proud heart, this heart of flint!" She lay down without prayer. There seemed to be a dreadful conflict between nature and grace; but grace obtained the ascendancy, for, before she closed her eyes, the Lord imparted to her a measure of that peace which passeth understanding.

On experiencing such serenity of mind, after a storm, she called on her mother, who asked her if she had not been asleep; "O no," she replied, "nor have I any desire for repose, if I continue as happy as I now am." She rose next morning early, and attended preaching at five o'clock, in full possession of her peace. The preacher asked her whether she could say her sins were forgiven; afraid to answer in the affirmative, in so many precise terms, her affectionate mother standing by, said, "Sir, she thinks she is accepted, and finds the fear of death taken away." "God," said the preacher, "never accepts of any person till he has forgiven that

person's sins; you must look for it; expect something you have never yet received." This, as was natural, threw a damp upon her spirits, as she was not perfectly acquainted with the way in which a sinner comes to Christ. It operated, however, powerfully upon her mind. She went home, and concluded, that, in order to be enabled to say she was forgiven, she must say her prayers; but she knew not what prayer to adopt. Looking up to heaven, she said, "Lord, if Thou art not angry with me, give me power to wrestle with Thee as Jacob did with the angel." The power was imparted; she was enabled to say, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me;" and that very moment she was filled with "joy unspeakable," exclaiming, "O Lord, this is the forgiveness of sins; the enemy may transform himself into an angel of light, but cannot fill the soul with love." She was now on the mountain top, enabled to pray without a form, and was ready to declare to others that the Lord was gracious.

Satan, who is ever seeking whom he may devour, was prepared with a snare. Her father-in-law, with a view to reproach the Methodists, invented and propagated various falsehoods; and she, with improper warmth, said, "Father, these are lies, and you know them to be such." Instantly, she observes, "the enemy snatched the roll out of my hand; but I sought it with tears, and found it in the course of two or three days, learning from what I suffered." She was not content to eat her morsel alone, but went among her relations and acquaintance, declaring the goodness of God. They told her that she was sufficiently pious before; that she ought not to leave the Church; that the Methodists were composed of the lowest classes of the people; and that she would only be despised by those around her. To this, she opposed the good which she had derived, informed them that she loved the Church better than ever, and only sought that honour which cometh from God. An uncle, from London, made her an advantageous offer, to go and live with him, provided she would leave the Methodists. But she was unmoved. She regularly attended preaching in the public streets, for at this period of her religious experience, which was

about 1740-1, there was no better accommodation for the preacher. Not unfrequently she saw the preacher pulled down from his stand, the clothes partly torn from his person, while she herself shared the insults of the mob.

It was not long before another snare was prepared for her. As the few people who adhered to the Methodist doctrine were poor and despised, she concluded, that it would be right to add a little lustre to their meanness. Accordingly, one Sabbath-day morning, she decked herself in her gayest attire, supposing, in the simplicity of her soul, that her respectable appearance might stamp honour on those of meaner garb. Her aunt Bayley, not aware of her motives, cautioned her against pride, and even charged her with it, requesting her to read the 3d chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, from the 16th verse. She instantly threw aside every ornament; but concluded that what she lost in gaiety, she might add in costliness, and proposed the attire of a rich Quaker for a model. This snare, too, was broken. She saw it was as improper to spend needless *time*, as it was to be at any needless *expense*, in dress. Several slanderous reports were in circulation, in which she had her portion, as in the "pitiless peltings" of the mob. Time afforded a satisfactory refutation, and she learnt from the whole the necessity of exercising charity towards others.

Having, in tracing her religious experience, reached that part of the History of Methodism assigned for it in the margin, it will be proper to return to the state of the infant society, whose members were in possession of the chapel erected by Mr. Edward Bennet, and entirely, as David Taylor seems to have cooled in his fervour, under the tuition of Mr. WESLEY's preachers. In addition to persons in mature life, of whom Mrs. Moor, Sarah Knutton's mother, was one, there were four or five young females who met in band with each other, two of whom were Miss J. Holmes and Hannah Oldale. The latter was the intimate friend of Miss Holmes, and the ninth person who joined the Methodist Society in Sheffield. She at this time enjoyed a sense of her acceptance with God; and, convinced of the necessity of a

further work of grace, sought and found it, and lived in the enjoyment of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit upwards of forty years. She died about the year 1816, when Mr. B. Wilkinson preached her funeral sermon, at Heeley. One of her daughters was married to Paul Booth, son of Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, and is still living. Miss J. Holmes appears to have been the oldest member of the band. Referring to this little Christian family, she observes, "the preachers taught one doctrine, and we all earnestly desired the blessed liberty from sin." Her mother, Mrs. Marriott, that being her name on her second marriage, was also making progress in the Divine life.



## CHAP. III.

*Messrs. Trembath and Larwood preach in the town and neighbourhood—Mr. Wesley's second visit—Dissensions—John Bennet's union with Mr. Wesley, with a further account of his history—Mr. Whitfield's arrival and reception—The preaching-house demolished by a mob—Mr. Wesley again preaches in Sheffield—David Taylor's further fluctuations of conduct—Mr. Charles Wesley's arrival in the neighbourhood, and his providential escape from the fury of the mob—The preachers impressed for soldiers.*

1742. As there were no minutes of any Conference till 1744, nor an account of any stations of preachers till several years after, we can only come to a knowledge of the principal agents employed in the work, in local situations, through the medium of biography, eye and ear witnesses, or persons, who, in early life, were acquainted with the original members of society. On this subject, satisfaction is received by consulting one of the *living records*, Mr. S. Birks, who is ever at hand. Two of the first preachers, in addition to John Nelson, who devoted much of their time and strength to the culture of this part of the vineyard, were Mr. Samuel Larwood and Mr. John Trembath. Mr. Myles fixes the commencement of Mr. Larwood's itinerant labours in 1743\*, but Mr. Birks recollects him in this neighbourhood so early as 1741. A considerable time prior to John Nelson's military captivity, from which he was released in 1744†, Mr. Larwood is noticed by him, as abused by the mob at Wakefield.‡ When he came into this neighbourhood, he had come direct from London on foot. After labouring here some time, he proceeded to the north, where he met with Mr. Thomas Mitchel, who acknowledges the encouragement he received from him. || We

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\* Chron. Hist., p. 448; 4th ed. † Journal, p. 170,  
|| Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 318.

‡ Ibid. p. 96.



find him in Dublin, in 1748, labouring with Mr. Jos. Cownley, and manifesting rather an arbitrary spirit in the reception and expulsion of members of society.\* He returned to England, and in 1750, Mrs. Hannah Harrison heard him preach at Acomb, near York, and "was pleased with his deliberate manner of preaching."† He left the connexion, and settled in London about the year 1753-4, where he took a chapel in the Borough of Southwark, called Zoar, in which he continued to preach, till he was taken hence, by a fever, November 1756. Mr. WESLEY remarks in his Journal, "I buried the remains of Samuel Larwood, who died of a fever on Sunday morning, deeply convinced of his unfaithfulness, and yet hoping to find mercy."‡

When Mr. Trembath laboured here, he was pious, useful, and popular. So much was he noticed, that a poor idiot, who was in the habit of leading his horse to water, caught the general sentiment. When asked to whom the horse belonged, his invariable reply was, "Mr. Trembath's, a Methodist preacher, and a child of God." On one occasion, Mr. Birks and his father accompanied Mr. Trembath from Thorp to Long-Houghton. The school-room which was provided, proved too strait for the congregation, in consequence of which the preacher took his stand out of doors. But such was the rudeness of the mob, that he was prevented from proceeding. The gentleman who occupied Houghton-hall saw Mr. Birks in the crowd, and invited him, together with the preacher and as many of the people as were disposed to worship God peaceably, to follow him to the Hall. While his countenance awed the rude in humbler stations, an enclosure in his own grounds afforded perfect security to the more serious part of the audience. The Hall itself now affords shelter to a Methodist preacher and his congregation. After Mr. Trembath had introduced the gospel into several of the towns and villages around, and itinerated in different parts of England, he went to Dublin, where he was ex-

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\* Meth. Mag. 1794, p. 477.

† Ibid. 1802, p. 320.

‡ Atmore's Meth. Mem. p. 240. This is a work which has not met with that share of countenance from the Methodist body, which it really merits.

tensively useful, and from whence, in 1747, he wrote a letter to Mr. WESLEY relative to the work of God.\* He wrote again to Mr. WESLEY, from Cork, in 1756†, which shews a partial quickening on the reception of Mr. WESLEY's letter in 1755, on his fall.‡ But in 1760, from a second letter of Mr. WESLEY's to him||, it appears he continued as he had lived for some years. Sheffield had him in his first and best days, and, it is to be feared, in his *only* good days. When Mr. WESLEY was on one of his last visits to Cornwall, poor Trembath was driving some ponies, loaded with lime, by which he procured a scanty subsistence. Knowing Mr. WESLEY's carriage, as it passed him, he left his charge and ran after it. Former times rushing upon his soul, he most affectingly, while running towards the object of his pursuit, exclaimed in the language of Elisha to the departing prophet, "My father, my father!"

1743. Mr. WESLEY visited these parts, for the second time, in the month of January, 1743. He remarks, "Between Doncaster and Epworth, I overtook one who immediately accosted me, with so many, and so impertinent questions, that I was quite amazed. In the midst of some of them, concerning my travels and my journey, I interrupted him and asked, 'Are you aware, that we are on a longer journey? That we are travelling toward eternity?' He replied instantly, 'O, I find you, I find you! I know where you are. Is not your name WESLEY?' 'Tis pity! 'Tis great pity! Why could not your father's religion serve you? Why must you have a new religion?' I was going to reply; but he cut me short, by crying out in triumph, 'I am a Christian, I am a Church-man! I am a Church-man! I am none of your *Culamites*!' as plain as he could speak; for he was so drunk, he could but just keep his seat. Having, then, clearly won the day, or as his phrase was, 'put them all down,' he began kicking his horse on both sides, and rode off as fast as he could."§

Having taken Epworth and Birstall in his route, he says,—“Wednesday, Jan. 5, I came wet and weary to

\* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 528.  
p. 492. || Ibid. 1780, p. 448.

† Ibid. 1779, p. 539.  
§ Journals, vol. ii. p. 181.

‡ Ibid. 1798,

Sheffield.”\* Here he took up his residence for the night, and set off for Donnington park at eight o’clock the next morning. His silence relative to the state of the Society at this period is supplied by his observations respecting it in April, when returning from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. “Friday, the 8th,” says he, “I preached at Knaresborough and at Leeds on ‘By grace ye are saved, through faith.’ The three following days I divided between Leeds and Birstal, and on Tuesday rode to Sheffield. I found the Society both here and at Barley Hall, earnestly pressing toward the mark: although there had not been wanting here also those, who by fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”† His remarks on his tour through these parts, in January, direct us, in some measure, to the persons to whom he refers. John Nelson had given him a melancholy account of many, who once made considerable progress in religion in the vicinity of Birstal, who had become thoughtless, trifling, and in some instances immoral. It was from thence that Mr. WESLEY had come, where the heaven had not ceased to work. To the influence of the opinions propagated by David Taylor and others, Miss Holmes probably refers, where, in her MS. Journal, she says, after having stated that the preachers all preached “one doctrine,” and the Society was pressing after full liberty from sin, “the preachers began to slide into different opinions, their love decreased, and their labours were less blessed than usual. The mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus seemed to be lost sight of, and a party spirit prevailed. I was cut to the heart, when I heard my dearest friends speaking evil one of another. I cried aloud; I told them they were crucifying Christ in the house of his friends; my head began to hang down; and I could not reprove sin as I had done before.” She further observes, “The preachers were not so serious in some instances as they had been, in their common visits. Some of them thought we had leaned too much to works, and left Mr. WESLEY, which shook my confidence in some degree. But the Lord supported me. As I had

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\* Journal, vol. ii. p. 182.

† Ibid. p. 194.

received Christ Jesus the Lord, so I was determined to walk in Him. I stood where stronger fell. I could not but exclaim, Oh who would not love such a Saviour as this ! He is strong to deliver ; I could truly say, I had no sharer of my heart with him." These are the very sentiments which the persons referred to by Mr. WESLEY sought to diffuse, and from which Miss Holmes and others were happily preserved. She travelled from place to place to hear preaching ; a few miles were no object, and she feared no weather. It was about this time that Mr. Samuel Birks became first acquainted with her.

While some were deserting Mr. WESLEY, others were uniting themselves to him. One of these was Mr. John Bennet, who, though he had conversed with him before, was not till now connected with him. He met with Mr. WESLEY near Chesterfield, April 15th, the day on which he left Sheffield, and was invited by him to London, Bristol, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne\*, from which period he commenced his itinerant labours among the Methodists. Few men were more useful in the early stages of Methodism than he. He superintended a circuit extending through part of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire, in which he rode about 200 miles every fortnight†, and which was emphatically called, "John Bennet's Circuit."‡ He afterwards sided with Mr. Whitfield, in reference to Calvinism, thus embracing what, in 1747, threw him into such a state of perplexity, as to induce him to term it a "place of torment." He separated, publicly, from Mr. WESLEY at Bolton, in Lancashire, April 3, 1752, styling him a Pope, and charging him with preaching popery ; and took a considerable part of the Society with him.§ He finally settled at Warbuton in Cheshire, where a meeting-house was erected for him in 1754—confining himself to a very narrow sphere of usefulness, after having been in the habit of "preaching *thirty-four* times in the fortnight, besides meeting the Societies, visiting the sick, &c."|| He suffered much in body after he became a

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\* Grace Bennet's Memoirs, pp. 20, 21.

† Ibid. p. 19.

‡ Nelson's Journal, p. 83.

§ Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 322 ; also Mr. W.'s Journal, vol. iii. pp. 113, 196.

|| Grace Bennet's Mem., p. 19 ; also, Atmore's Meth. Mem., pp. 49—51.



resident minister, and all asperity vanished before his death. Honourable mention is made of him by Mr. Grimshaw, who travelled with him into Lancashire, Cheshire, and other places\*, visiting societies which had been raised through his instrumentality, before Mr. WESLEY had preached in that part of the kingdom. In looking into an interesting letter of John Bennet's respecting the work of God in his extensive circuit†, we cannot but lament that the narrowing system of Calvinism should have curtailed his usefulness, that a few non-essentials, which will admit persons of either side into heaven, should have induced him to lessen those labours, so essential, under God, to the felicity of thousands of immortal beings. He died rejoicing, May 24th, 1759. Through some mistake, Mr. Atmore fixes the commencement of his itinerancy in 1747, and the period of his separation from Mr. WESLEY on Dec. 26, and not, as stated by his son, Mr. Wm. Bennet, who is in possession of all his papers, in April, 1752.

In addition to others, who have been noticed as the first-fruits of Methodism in Derbyshire, Joseph Hadfield deserves to be handed down to future generations. He was born in or about Oct. 29, 1724, on a small estate belonging to His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, in Peak Forest. He lived at this period at Small Dale, near Tideswell. One writer states his conversion to God to have taken place before he was twenty years of age, and another pronounces it impossible to ascertain the exact period; however, both agree to the *fact*, which fact was fully established by the unequivocal testimony of his whole temper and behaviour during a period of at least *seventy years*. Perhaps we may venture to fix on Mr. WESLEY as the instrument of this great change, since it appears that Joseph often spoke with rapture of the abundant consolation he experienced under his ministry. Having tasted the word of life, he became eager to hear the gospel, and evinced his warm attachment to its ministers. Hence, after the labour of the day, he generally went four, six, or eight miles to hear a sermon

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\* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 475—7.

† Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 471.



preached by Messrs. Bennet, Nelson, Westal, &c.\*, and frequently acted as guide to these apostolic travellers in that mountainous country. He suffered much persecution, but always manifested the meek, humble disciple. He experienced much delight and profit in the means of grace, and steadily continued to attend them, though at a distance from them, till under the pressure of growing years and infirmities he failed in the attempt. He proceeded part of the way, as usual, to the house of God, but was obliged to return. In his confinement he applied to the Sacred Oracles. When visited by his friends, and questioned respecting the state of his mind, his general answer was, "I feel the Lord present." About six days before his death, its approach was apparent both to himself and those around him. He spoke but little, but that little sufficiently indicated that his faith remained unshaken, and his peace undiminished, till he resigned his soul into the hands of his Creator. "God is with me," was his language; "His will be done." He died in September 1815; and seemed to have outlived reproach; for when saints or sinners heard, "Joseph Hadfield is dead," they spontaneously rejoined, "He was a good man." Scarcely an octavo page and a half is written of the account of Joseph Hadfield†; and thus, through the indifference of friends and others, a volume of unrecorded facts has been buried with him. John Bennet, one of Joseph's most early religious friends, paid particular attention to the work of God in Derbyshire. He did not, however, forget Sheffield, where he received his first serious impressions; and about this time his visits were often repeated.

With such a man as John Bennet in the neighbourhood, the little Society here could not but be greatly benefited. He was in his first love. The members needed such aid. A Laodicean spirit was not the only thing they had to oppose, and which had produced in some a kind of moral torpor; but Mr. Whitfield visited the neighbourhood, who, ere this, had separated from Mr. WESLEY, and obtained no small share of influence in his favour. Hence, as of old, when one was for Paul,

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\* Meth. Mag. 1815, p. 231; Ibid. for 1817, p. 367. † Ibid. 1817, p. 367.

and another for Apollos, some were for Whitfield, and others for WESLEY; and these two eminent men were placed in opposition to each other, and the people suffered a rivalry of affection to take possession of their hearts, prejudicial to the interests of both. When Mr. Whitfield first visited these parts, he was met by Mr. S. Birks, at Rothwell, near Wakefield, accompanied with John Johnson, of Barley Hall, who acted as guides to him to High Green, near Thorncliffe, where he slept all night at Mr. Joseph Smith's. He set off next morning, and preached in a large orchard in the town of Rotherham, from whence he journeyed to Sheffield. Here he met with a friendly reception from Mr. Edward Bennet, who attached himself to him, and afterwards united with the Calvinists.

The persecuting part of the populace now became outrageous. Finding that stones, mud, rotten eggs, and other materials produced no effect in intimidating the Methodists, they concluded that the most effectual plan would be, to demolish the building in which they worshipped; and the nest being thus destroyed, the birds would disperse. Accordingly, a grand muster took place on the 25th of May, 1743, when the whole of the building, erected in 1741, was levelled with the ground.\* The daring rioters, according to the most authentic information that can be obtained, began by undermining as much of the building as would admit of its standing, till the sportive moment arrived for the general crash; this being done, they then, by means of ropes and long poles, involved the whole in one common ruin. This chapel, which Mr. Hunter gives Mr. E. Bennet the credit of erecting, as well as the one that succeeded it, was not reared without the subscriptions of the Society. Being now destitute of a place of worship, the members, with Mr. E. Bennet at their head, commenced another building.† Towards this erection subscriptions were again raised; and Mr. E. Bennet, being one of the principal subscribers, had, by the consent of the members, and for the better security of the place, the building made over to him. This was the subject of considera-

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\* History of Sheffield and Hallamshire, p. 171.

† Ibid.

ble uneasiness afterwards, for, by some means or other, it fell entirely into the hands of Mr. Bennet; and, on his leaving the Methodists, the other subscribers felt themselves aggrieved, that the whole of the edifice should go with him. To settle the dispute at this period is impossible. The probable conjecture is, that he rendered the Society some compensation for their share in the expense of the erection, through which it was entirely alienated to himself; for he seems to have been too good a man to have been guilty of fraudulent conduct. The building, it is reported, was made in the form of a dwelling-house, and with chimneys, with a view to beguile the turbulent, that they might not pull it down while in a state of progress; and certainly this report is not at all contradicted by its appearance as it now stands, in the occupation of Mr. Addy, hair-dresser, in Pinstone-lane. It appeared, on examining the building, that the ground-floor was not taken up, on its entire appropriation to dwelling-houses. The fire-places and partition-walls of the lower rooms have the flags for their basis, on which the poor people used to stand and kneel in the solemn worship of God. The writer never entered the house, or passed the door, without feeling a degree of veneration for the spot. It was several times attacked by the rioters, but survived their fury.\*

What steps were taken on the occasion, to recover damages, and to punish the ringleaders, is not certain; but the probability is in favour of active measures, as all was quiet towards the month of November, which scarcely would otherwise have been the case, since, from still more subsequent proceedings, it is evident that the same spirit was inherent in most of them. "Friday, November 25th, at the desire of Arthur Bate," says Mr. WESLEY, "I rode to Wakefield in order to talk with his wife. But I soon found I did not come to talk, but to hear.† After an hour or two, we rode on to Barley Hall, where I preached on 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Thence we rode to Sheffield, where I preach-

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\* Hist. of Hallamshire, p. 171.

† See a letter of this female's to Mr. Wesley, about two years afterwards, Journals, vol. ii. p. 321.



SECOND READING HOUSE, NEWFIELD.





ed, in perfect peace, on ‘ We know that we are of God.’\* Here he stopped during the night. Mr. E. Bennet generally entertained him at this period.

Previous to his coming to Sheffield, he had been at Syke-house, where he “received a full account of poor David Taylor, once a workman that needed not to be ashamed,” and gives the following summary account of the changes he had undergone during the short period of three years:—“Three years since, he knew all we preached to be true. Then Mr. Ingham brought him over to German stillness. When I talked with him at Sheffield, he was thoroughly sensible of his mistake; but Mr. Simpson soon drew him into it again. A third time he was deeply convinced by my brother, and unconvinced shortly after. He was once more brought into the Scripture way by Mr. Graves, and seemed to be established therein: but in a few months he veered about to the old point, and has been a *poor sinner* indeed ever since.”† He at length *missed his providential way* relative to his marriage, in not submitting to the mode prescribed by law. In the judgment of those who knew him best, he took this step (though unguarded and unjustifiable) in the simplicity of his heart; this, however, was far from satisfying many of his friends; and, viewing his conduct in this instance in an unfavourable light, they became deeply prejudiced against him, and his usefulness in consequence was greatly impeded. He was now among the Moravians; but, not finding himself comfortable, he soon left them, and then united himself to, or at least attended the meetings of the Society of Friends; but neither did he there find rest. He afterwards returned again to the Methodists, and attempted to preach once more; but, alas, the spirit was gone, and the residue of his days was spent in comparative obscurity.‡ What time he rejoined the Methodist body is not known; but it is not improbable that he was in some way connected with it in 1760. Mr. Benjamin Wilkinson heard him at that period preach in a barn at Shire-Green; and though only a boy about seven years

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\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 223.

† A'more's Meth. Mem. p. 412.

‡ Ibid.

of age, he has a perfect recollection of the impression made upon his heart at the time. The whole service inspired him with sacred awe; it seemed as though a voice spake to his inmost soul, "These are the people of God," and he could never, when he arrived at riper years, be induced to persecute them either in word or deed. David departed this life about the year 1780; and there is every reason to hope that, after all his tossings and changes, he anchored in God at last, and died in peace.

Mr. WESLEY appears to have entered Sheffield on this occasion as soon as circumstances would permit; for though tranquillity was restored by the month of November, we find him in the immediate neighbourhood without once entering the town, and that, too, at a time when his presence would have animated the Society. It might be deemed prudent not to enter immediately. However, what the few scared sheep could not find at home, they went abroad to seek. He was at Syke-house on July 26th; and, after visiting Newcastle-upon-Tyne and its vicinity, rode on, from Leeds and Birstal, to Barley Hall on the 25th of August. He observes, "Many from Sheffield were there. We rejoiced greatly together in 'Him who justifieth the ungodly.\*'" He then appears to have passed quietly through Sheffield to Nottingham without leaving any record of what had just happened. He was at Syke-house, also, on Oct. 28th.

1744. Though Methodism had obtained ground in Thorp, and at Barley Hall, and had acquired a degree of respectability from the character and circumstances of some of its adherents, yet persecution raged with considerable violence. A report having been circulated, that Mr. CHARLES WESLEY was going to preach at the latter place, the principal agents of mischief collected their forces together in the village of Thorp, through which he was first to pass. They disposed themselves in the most advantageous positions for the purpose of carrying their diabolical designs into execution. The main road lies directly through the village, and the road to Barley Hall makes an abrupt turn to the left after

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\* Journals, vol. ii. pp.199, 200.

It is entered, without any opening to the right. Here they placed themselves; a certain portion sheltered by the hedges, on the road leading to Barley Hall, and another division concealed by the houses in the village, in an opposite direction to that which was to be entered by the preacher and his party. All were waiting in breathless expectation for the arrival of the travellers. Mr. Charles Wesley appeared, in company with the present Mr. S. Birks's father, and some other friends. They turned up the road leading to Barley Hall; before they had gone many yards, that detachment of the mob-forces in the front set up a shout of triumph; and on turning round to make their escape, they found themselves hemmed in and assailed by the remainder in the rear. It was a moment of peril; but the instrument of deliverance came unexpectedly to hand. Mr. S. Birks, who was then a stout young man, about eighteen years of age, and possessed of a considerable portion of native courage, had gone earlier than usual to plough that morning, in order to be able to attend preaching. He had left the field for the day, and was coming up the Barley Hall road in a direction to the mob. On hearing the shout of the persecutors, and supposing something particular was going forward, he cracked his whip, mounted on one horse, leading a second, and driving two abreast before him. Just when the crowd were about to proceed to acts of violence, he drove in among them, some leaping over the hedges, others flying before him, for their own personal safety; meanwhile, Mr. WESLEY and his friends made their escape, by retracing their steps, and going round by way of Chapel-town, to Barley Hall. The principal injury sustained was the loss of time, together with Mr. Charles Wesley's hat; but he arrived at the destined place, with his handkerchief tied over his wig, in which state he had to ride some miles, time enough to preach at one o'clock at noon. The mob were left behind, with little other power, after recovering from their panic, than to heap their curses upon the head of "young Birks," who also was out of sight, and had rode home with no small degree of heroic glee, to prepare for preaching at Mr. Johnson's, where he attended in high spirits, to the no

small surprise of his father and the friends. The congregation worshipped in peace.

Not only did the vulgar lift up the arm of persecution against all who were designated Methodists, but persons in authority were on the alert to press the preachers for soldiers. The societies, a considerable distance round Sheffield, were thrown into the greatest alarm in the month of May. Mr. John Downes, for the better security of his person, was thrown into Lincoln gaol; John Nelson was secured on the 4th of the month; Thomas Beard, who became a martyr through the treatment he received, was also in custody. These men, contrary to the laws of both God and the king, were torn from their work and their families, and sent for soldiers, for no other reason assigned, than that they were preachers. John Downes was sent from Epworth, and John Nelson from Atherton, with both of which places Sheffield was connected, as occasionally sharing in the labours of the same preachers. Mr. WESLEY was now on his northern journey; a fortunate circumstance for the dispirited societies. He preached at Sheffield, May 11, which was his second visit after the destruction of the chapel; and preached again at Barley Hall, the next day, about 10 o'clock in the forenoon. It was his design to have gone the shortest way from Sheffield to Newcastle. But he altered his route, and went to Epworth: and, says he, "It was well I did, considering the inexpressible panic which had spread itself in all places. So that I came just in time to remind all the poor frightened sheep, that even the hairs of our head are all numbered." After spending the Sunday at Epworth, he rode to Syke-house, in the neighbourhood of Doncaster; but while journeying to the place, he was met by two or three persons, who advised him to go another way from the one he intended; assigning as a reason, that in one of the villages through which he would have to pass, the people were up in arms, and waiting for him on the road, many of whom had made themselves drunk, and so were prepared for any kind of mischief. He accordingly took another direction; but when he arrived at Syke-house, some of the friends hastened thither also, and told him, "All



the men in the congregation would be pressed." Others affirmed, "The mob was just coming, and that they would certainly fire the house, or pull it down to the ground." He told them, "Then our only way is, to make the best use of it while it is standing." So he began expounding the tenth chapter of St. Matthew; and no man opened his lips against them.\* Here Mr. WESLEY would receive a full account of John Nelson, as Mr. Holmes, of Syke-house, was present when he was taken by the constable's deputy for a soldier.† On Mr. WESLEY reaching Birstal, he found the brethren partly mourning, and partly rejoicing on John's account, and had "great cause to praise God, whose grace, even in these trying times, was sufficient for them."‡

Mr. WESLEY proceeded to the north on the 21st of May, and before his return, met with John Nelson and Thomas Beard, who had also proceeded thither with the regiment into which they were pressed. The place of meeting was the city of Durham, on the 8th of June. Mr. WESLEY simply states the fact||, but John Nelson enters into particulars, in a way the most artless and touching§, and which evidently stamps the interview with the hand of God. During John's soldiership, the Lord was not unmindful of the societies in these parts. He found, on his return home, after his release from captivity, which was in the beginning of August, that Jonathan Reeves, who afterwards procured episcopal ordination, and became minister of the Magdalen Hospital, and curate of White-chapel, and John Bennet, had been supplying his lack of service, and that several, especially at Birstal and Leeds, had been converted through their preaching.¶ Mr. WESLEY, who returned from the north before John Nelson, accompanied John Bennet into Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire, on Thursday, the 14th of June, where, on the borders of each county, he preached a sermon; and on his return on the Friday, preached at Chinley at five o'clock in the morning, about noon in the Peak, and in the evening at Barley Hall; from whence he proceeded to Syke-house on the Saturday, and thence to Epworth.\*\*

\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 246.

† Nelson's Journal, p. 117, where the whole unvarnished tale is given; p. 111, and forward.

‡ Journals, vol. ii. p. 247.

§ Ibid. p. 248.

¶ Nelson's Journal, p. 157.

¶ Ibid. p. 176.

\*\* Wesley's Journals, vol. ii. p. 249.

## CHAP. IV.

*A second preaching-house—Sampson Staniforth's conversion—Mr. John Wilson—The work of God spreads to the neighbouring towns and villages—Mr. Lowly's family—Mr. Wesley preaches on the ruins of the old building—Richard Moss; narrowly escapes being impressed for a soldier—The alarm excited by the Scotch rebels—The demolition of the second preaching-house—Mr. Charles Wesley's second visit—Disturbance—Mr. Whilfield's second visit—Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats, unites with the Methodists.*

1744. THE Society in Sheffield does not appear to have enjoyed their second place of worship any great length of time; for after Mr. Hunter notices its erection, he remarks, "About the same time, Mr. John Wilson, an optician, built for them another chapel, which was pulled down by the mob."\* If Mr. Hunter had bestowed the same labour on the early history of the Methodists in Sheffield, as he has done on other religious bodies, and especially his favourite child, the *Upper Chapel*, he might have furnished both his readers and succeeding historians with some interesting details: but he has passed over the largest body of Christians in the town of Sheffield, the Established Church excepted, with a bare notice, and that very incorrect. However, he may be thanked for handing down to posterity the name of Mr. John Wilson, one of the firm friends and first supporters of Methodism in Sheffield, and uncle to the present T. Holy, Esq. of the same place. It is not improbable, that Mr. E. Bennet separated himself from the society about this period, which rendered Mr. Wilson's erection necessary, having rendered it impracticable for them to occupy the one to which he had so largely contributed. Where this third building was erected, of which the Methodists had the occupancy, is

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\* Hist. of Hallamshire, p. 171.

uncertain; though report fixes it in the neighbourhood of the other, and near what is now called Burgess-street.

1745. The members of society were called upon to rejoice in the work of God abroad, as well as at home. It was some time in the year 1745, when a letter from a young man, of the name of Sampson Staniforth, excited no small degree of interest among the truly pious. He was born in Sheffield, December, 1720, where he was put apprentice to a baker. He enlisted as a soldier at the age of nineteen, in spite of the tears and entreaties of his mother; and, after some hair-breadth escapes from situations into which he was led by his own rashness, he joined the army in Germany a few days after the battle of Dettingen. While he was abroad, he became serious, and associated with John Haime, John Evans, Wm. Clements, and other pious soldiers. No sooner did he obtain personal piety himself, than he felt an anxious solicitude for the salvation of his parents and friends. Accordingly, he wrote home, and the following is the account as given by himself:—"My dear mother," says he, "had from time to time sent me little supplies, either in money, or in such things as she knew I wanted. I now sent her a long letter, asking pardon of my father and her for all my past disobedience, and telling them that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all my sins. I thanked her for what she had done for me, but desired she would not send any thing more, as I knew it must straiten her, and I had now learnt to be content with my wages. This letter they did not understand, and it was handed about from one to another, till it came into the hands of one Mr. Wadsworth, a dissenting minister, who having known what manner of life I had led before, could not in any wise believe in it. However, he wrote me a friendly letter, and sent me a Bible, which was more welcome to me than gold; as was a Common Prayer book, which my mother sent me. A few days after, my letter came into the hands of Mr. John Wilson, who was then one of the chief persons in your (Mr. WESLEY's) society in Sheffield, and much alive to God. He sent me a comfortable letter and a Hymn book, which much refreshed my soul. About this time you (Mr. WESLEY) sent some

books over, which were of great service to us.”\* There are three ministers of the name of Wadsworth, noticed by Hunter†, the father and two sons. The person who obtained the letter was probably the younger Wadsworth, who officiated in the Upper Chapel from 1740 to 1758. That he should not credit its contents is not at all surprising, when it is known that he, in common with many of the other dissenters of that day, had embraced the Arian notions of Dr. S. Clarke, a system but little favourable to experimental religion. When it fell into the hands of Mr. John Wilson, it was perused by one who understood it—one who could improve upon it—and one who knew how to give proper advice to its writer. The letter was written from Ghent; and it is probable that, in consequence of another written from the same place a little time before, by John Evans‡, Mr. WESLEY, who was labouring in every Christian way to do good, sent the books alluded to by Staniforth, an act of mercy which had not been known but through him. The life of Sampson Staniforth, replete with incident, is published in the Methodist Magazine||, written by himself, in a letter addressed to Mr. WESLEY. He was truly a child of both Providence and grace. He began to preach in 1754, and died in the work, at Deptford, as a local preacher, in 1799, in the 79th year of his age.§

Methodism continued to gain ground in Sheffield, and was gradually finding its way into the neighbouring towns and villages. Among others of its early seats, was High-green, about a mile from Thorncliffe. Both David Taylor and John Nelson had visited it prior to this. They were entertained by Mr. Joseph Smith, a farmer, in whose house they preached, and where a society was now formed, consisting of ten or twelve members. It was also introduced into Rotherham, Brinsworth, and Thribergh, as appears from Miss Holmes’s papers. Mr. Lowly, steward to a lady of the name of Finch, lived at the latter place, and had, with

\* Meth. Mag. 1783, p. 122.

† Wesley’s Journals, vol. ii. p. 260.

‡ 237, 294, 343.

† Hist. of Hallamshire, p. 169.

|| For 1783, pp. 13, 66, 122, 181,

§ Meth. Mag. 1799, pp. 401, 608.



his family, attached himself to Mr. WESLEY. He was born in the year 1692; Mrs. Lowly in 1699, and died April, 1762. Miss Margaret Lowly, one of their daughters, was born September 2nd, 1719, and was deeply pious. In a letter dated February, 1745, from Thribergh, communicated by a descendant, she observes, to another female, "I have wished to see you ever since I heard of you, and now have some hopes I shall have my desire very soon. I can truly say, I have wept over you with tears of joy, and have felt something of that love which was between David and Jonathan; even that love which shall abide when faith and hope shall cease. When we meet in the body, may it be for the glory of God, and the edification of our souls! May we be joined together in the unity of the Spirit! O, how did I rejoice over your letter, when expressing how near your soul approached Christ! O, it was nigh to him indeed! He came to comfort you; he saw you weary and heavy laden, and came to give you rest. He has made you poor in spirit, and your's is the kingdom of heaven. He has given you to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and you shall be filled. The word of the Lord shall stand for ever. He will not break a bruised reed; he will not quench the smoking flax. What shall I say? The whole Bible is on your side; there is not a word in it against you. Take it then, and read it to your comfort; collect the promises together, and plead them with the Lord. He cannot deny his own word; He is faithful who hath promised. May the Lord give you that faith which overcomes the world, and an assurance of his favour!" &c.

Thriberg is about two or three miles from Rotherham, on the Doncaster road; and between Rotherham and it a friendly intercourse was opened, in a Methodistical point of view, through the medium of Mr. Lowly's family and William Green, the latter of whom had now settled at Rotherham, where he taught school, opened his door for preaching, and visited the neighbouring places himself, as a local preacher. It appears from a manuscript book of William Green's, obligingly lent by his daughters, and from which have been obtained many valuable hints relative to dates and circumstances,

and in some instances solid information, that an intimacy took place between him and William Shent, of Leeds, a man often noticed in John Nelson's Journal, and before whose door John frequently preached in Leeds, but who, after bearing the heat and burthen of the day, fell into sin again. He was at this time zealous and devout; otherwise there would have been no intercourse between him and the pious Wm. Green. The latter was like a speckled bird in the place in which he lived; and the only persons to keep him in countenance, as Methodists, were two or three poor persons in Rotherham, and two men and their wives in Masbro',—a day, indeed, of small and feeble things.

As there was no regular preaching at the different places, the members of Society had to travel a considerable distance to hear the word. This was particularly the case when Mr. WESLEY was any way within reach. They crossed the country, in all directions, to give him the meeting at the nearest point. He was now, Feb. 21, on his way to the north, and says, "Wm. Holmes met us at Doncaster, and piloted us through the mire, and water, and snow, lately fallen, to Syke-house. Finding the congregation ready, I began preaching as soon as I came in, and exhorted them to follow after the gift of God. Several from Epworth met us here, and we rejoiced unto God with reverence."\* Mr. Richard Moss was with Mr. WESLEY, who went to him at first in the capacity of servant, and was left in the north during this journey, where, at Newcastle, he began to preach.† Mr. WESLEY returned by way of Sykehouse on the 16th of April, where he "preached to a little company‡," proceeded into Lincolnshire, returned again to Syke-house, and, after taking a route by way of Leeds, Bradford, Lancashire, and Cheshire, came from Taddington, in the Peak of Derbyshire, to Sheffield, on the 29th of the same month. Here, says he, "I preached on the floor of the late house (which the good Protestant mob had just pulled down) to the largest and one of the quietest congregations I ever remember to have seen" in the town.|| The

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\* Journal's, vol. ii. p. 269.      † Ibid. p. 269; also Meth. Mag. 1799, p. 56, 57.      ‡ Journals, vol. ii. p. 276.      || Ibid. p. 281.

chapel, or "*house*," as it is here called, and which was common in primitive times, was that which Mr. Edward Bennet was the instrument of raising, and from which, it should appear, the materials had been removed,—probably to be employed in the erection of its successor. Mr. WESLEY preached the next day at Barley Hall, and returned from thence to proceed to Nottingham.

Richard Moss, who had been left a few weeks at Newcastle by Mr. WESLEY, in consequence of the preacher in that neighbourhood accompanying the latter, now returned, and was hunted from place to place by persons who wished to press him for a soldier. He arrived at Syke-house on the 31st of May, and, after remaining there three days, was again obliged to travel for safety. The occasion of his departure from thence was rather singular, but providential. Mr. Holmes, of Sykehouse, dreamt that the constables and church-wardens came to press his guest for a soldier. On awaking, which was about three o'clock in the morning, he proceeded to the room of the slumbering pilgrim, and told him his dream, intimating that he could not help being persuaded, that something of the kind was on foot, and entreated him to rise and go to Norton. He accordingly rose, and was accompanied by his host about half a mile on the road. When Mr. Holmes returned, he found the constables and churchwardens at his house, inquiring, "Where is the preacher?" stating further, "The minister has ordered us to take all these preachers up, and send them away for soldiers." Mr. Holmes replied, "I have just now sent him away; but you will see him in that day when God shall judge the world in righteousness."

The hunted preacher went from Norton to Epworth, where he had another narrow escape through the evident interposition of Divine Providence. He reached Sheffield on Tuesday, June 11. But though he fled hither like a heron to her haunt, the hawks were still abroad; there was a good understanding among the enemies of Methodism in the different places. When speaking to some of the Society on the Wednesday evening, the constables and church-wardens entered the house, saying, they had a warrant to take him for a soldier. On deli-

vering their message, they instantly took hold of him, and dragged him down stairs, no one attempting any resistance. Mary, the wife of Edward Bennet, a member of the little Society, said, "Come, let us pray to God for him." She no sooner began her devout exercise, than immediately one of the most furious of the mob, who then held him, left off swearing, and exclaimed, "I shall have nothing to do in this matter." All the others were of the same mind; so they let him loose, and departed. On the Thursday, he gave an exhortation to a great company, both morning and evening, without molestation, and on the Friday left the town. He was afterwards ordained by the Bishop of London as a missionary for the island of Providence, one of the Bahama Islands, in the West Indies, where he preached the Gospel with success for several years, in connection with Mr. Tizzard, his fellow-labourer. In this employment he continued till he finished his course with joy.\*

There was, in the course of this year,—a period distinguished by the Scotch Rebellion,—a great want of soldiers; and the persecutors of the Methodists shielded themselves under the plea of necessity in some instances. The King's troops, to whom Mr. Wm. Woodhouse, of Hallam, carried straw for the accommodation of the horses, were encamped on Doncaster moor; and in proportion as the report spread, of the approach of the rebels, the people were engaged in concealing their pewter dishes, plate, and other valuables. In this employment Mr. Woodhouse found his parents on reaching home. The description which Mr. WESLEY gives of the morals of the military is truly lamentable. October 10th, says he, "We dined at Ferrybridge, where we were conducted to General Wentworth, who did us the honour to read over all the letters we had about us. We lay at Doncaster, nothing pleased with the drunken, cursing, swearing soldiers who surrounded us on every side."† Monday, the 14th, he came to Sheffield, and was perfectly at a loss what to do with the congregation.

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\* Meth. Mag. 1798, pp. 57—59; also, Mr. Wesley's Journals, vol. ii. pp. 302, 3.

† Journals, vol. ii. p. 313.



The people stood above stairs, and below, and in the yard; but still there was not room. Here he tarried over the Tuesday, on which day he wrote the tract, entitled, "A Word in Season, or, Advice to an Englishman." The next morning he preached at Barley Hall, which place was also visited by Richard Moss in the month of June, and then proceeded to the north again, where he found Mr. Tremboth labouring in Newcastle.\* The alarm which was spread throughout the kingdom had a good influence on the minds of some of the people. The approach of the rebels produced serious thought; but the preachers met with many interruptions from the watchmen, posted at the end of almost every village, and on the different roads, while travelling from place to place. December 18th was the day appointed for a National Fast, and on that very day the Duke's army was remarkably preserved in the midst of the ambuscades at Clifton Moor.

1746. While a few were brought to serious reflection, others were disposed for every sort of wanton mischief; an instance of which occurred in the early part of the year following. Mr. Hunter, in his "History of Sheffield and Hallamshire," speaks of two Methodist Chapels which were pulled down by the mob, and which have been already alluded to; the one characterized as Mr. Edward Bennet's, and the other Mr. John Wilson's. The latter, like the former, he barely notices, only with this difference, that no date is fixed for its demolition.† Fortunately an unpublished document was found by the writer, when examining the papers of Mr. Green, that enters into the particulars, an exact copy of which is as follows:—

"On Monday, the 9th of Feb. 1746, about six o'clock in the evening, a great number of persons, to the amount of four or five hundred, assembled themselves together in a riotous and tumultuous manner at Sheffield, and riotously and tumultuously began to pull down a dwelling-house in Sheffield, near the New Church yard, belonging to John Wilson, of Sheffield aforesaid, and

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\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 314.

† Hallamshire, p. 171.

then in the occupation of Henry Alsop, as tenant thereof; and continued such riot and tumult every night from thence to Saturday night after inclusive, during which time they quite pulled down all the said house.

“On the Tuesday night the proclamation appointed in the 1st of Geo. I. was read to the rioters by a constable for Sheffield, two constables being present for that purpose (there being no justice of the peace in town); but the rioters did not disperse themselves upon it, or take any notice of it, but fell to work afresh in pulling the house down. Upon this, the said John Wilson applied to two justices of the peace in the neighbourhood for a warrant against some of the rioters, but they declined granting such warrant, or to act therein.

“What is the best method for the said John Wilson to take in this case? If he prosecute any of the rioters by indictment upon the statute, whether will such prosecution be any prejudice to him in an action against the hundred for damages or not?

“This is a capital offence within the statute of the 1st of Geo. I., although the proclamation was not made by the proper officer, by a subsequent independent clause of the same act, whereby all persons riotously assembled to the disturbance of the peace, who shall demolish or pull down, or begin to demolish or pull down, any dwelling-house, barn, stable, or other out-houses, are adjudged felons, and to suffer death as in the case of felony, without benefit of the clergy. As this is a crime of so high a nature, Mr. Wilson ought to apply to some justice of the peace that acts for the division, and have the parishes taken up and committed to the Castle of York, which will save the prosecutor both the expense and trouble of two attendances at the Assizes, as the indictment-trial, in case they are in custody, may be at the same Assizes: besides, it will seem extremely negligent in the prosecutor to the grand jury and court, to let offenders, guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, go at large unmolested; and it is not to be supposed that any justice of the peace will refuse an information, or to grant his warrant to apprehend a felon.

“The prosecution of the offenders will be no bar or hindrance to the said John Wilson or his lessee's action

against any of two or more of the inhabitants of the hundred for damages sustained by the demolishing or pulling down of the said house; which action the said statute gives the sufferer, and authorises to make any and such of the hundred defendants, as to him shall seem proper.

“Mar. 11, 1746.

RICH<sup>d</sup>. WILSON.”

The above, which contains the opinion and advice of a professional gentleman, shews the spirit of both the mob and the magistracy at the time,—the one in injuring their peaceable neighbours, and the other in encouraging them by refusing to grant redress. Though the building is styled a “dwelling-house,” yet it is the “chapel” referred to by Mr. Hunter. The fact is, it served the two-fold purpose of a chapel and a dwelling, and, like the rest of the original places of worship among the Methodists, was called a “preaching-house—a term to which Mr. WESLEY was very partial, and which he advised the preachers to apply to places entirely appropriated to the public worship of God among the Methodists.\* The place in question was intended originally for the accommodation of the Methodists, but was built in the form of a dwelling-house, and, for its better security, was inhabited by Henry Alsop.

Mr. John Nelson conversed with an old female member of Society, in 1798, who was in the building when the mob attempted to pull it down, and narrowly escaped from the utmost peril in which she had been placed through them. What may be read with still greater interest, so recent as Oct. 30th, 1821, the writer conversed with an old man, Thomas Britner, aged 91, long in the employ of Messrs. S. & C. Younge, silver and plated manufacturers, Sheffield, who was present at the demolition of both this and the preaching-house in 1743. This old man was a member of the Church of England, and had long enjoyed the consolation of true religion. He, like old G. Wainwright and W. Woodhouse, died soon after he communicated the information—in the space of eight

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\* Minutes, vol. ii. p. 41.

or ten days. He was visited in his last illness by the Rev. Thomas Cotterill, perpetual curate of St. Paul's, who expressed himself to a friend as highly pleased with the Christian frame of mind in which he found the departing saint. This must have been a personal gratification to Mr. C., as it was under his enlightened ministry, that T. Britner was wont to sit with great delight.

Mr. WESLEY visited Sheffield on the 20th of the month, nine days after the above instrument was drawn up. What was his advice on the occasion cannot be ascertained, though very likely to prosecute, since damages were obtained for the dwelling, but not the preaching-house, because not licensed; but there is another circumstance which he has recorded, and which cannot fail to be interesting. "I rode," says he, "by Barley Hall to Sheffield. I was glad of having an opportunity here of talking with a child I had heard of. She was convinced of sin some weeks before by the words of her elder brother (about eight years of age), dying at a hundred years old, in the full triumph of faith. I asked her abruptly, 'Do you love God?' She said, 'Yes, I do love him with all my heart.' I said, 'Why do you love Him?' She answered, 'Because He *has* saved me.' I asked, 'How has he saved you?' She replied, 'He has taken away my sins.' I said, 'How do you know that?' She answered, 'He told me himself on Saturday, Thy sins are forgiven thee; and I believe Him; and I pray to Him without a book. I was afraid to die; but now I am not afraid to die; for if I die, I shall go to Him.' "†

Sheffield was visited by Mr. CHARLES WESLEY, also, in the course of the year. He took his stand out of doors, on a Sabbath morning, on Sheffield moor. A person of the name of Oxley, brother to a butcher of that name, disturbed the congregation very much; so much so as to attract the attention of Mr. WESLEY, who spoke to him in a pointed manner. On receiving the rebuke, he was still more outrageous in his conduct, and declared if he could get to the preacher, he would send his knife into his breast. "Mr. WESLEY," said Mr. S. Birks, who was present, "threw open his waistcoat, saying to

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\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 336.







*M. J. G. 1860*

WOODSEATS, NEAR SHEFFIELD.

the people, 'Make way, make way for that Rabshakeh, and let him come up!' but the people stood wedged together, and no further violence was offered." During the last prayer, Mr. WESLEY prayed very fervently for him, that the Lord would convert his soul, and thus turn him from the error of his ways.

God, who is rich in mercy, seemed to heap his blessings on the heads of the persecuted this year, by sending his principal servants to bear up their hands. Mr. G. Whitfield either followed, or struck in between Mr. JOHN and Mr. CHARLES WESLEY. He, too, took his stand on Sheffield moor. One of our old members, Marshall Thorpe, of Hallam, was present on the occasion; but such was the immense concourse of people, that he could not get near the preacher, and could only hear him repeating, with great energy, in different parts of his sermon, which he concluded to be his text, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." This old man was born Oct. 27, 1730, and could see to read without the aid of glasses in 1821. Mr. Hanwell, who accompanied the writer in two or three of his excursions, visited him, April 11, 1821, when several interesting facts were obtained. The venerable worthy died about ten months afterwards; and death, in putting in the sickle, found him like a shock of corn, fully ripe for the garner of God. He heard Mr. Wm. Alwood preach at Bradwell, in Derbyshire, in 1753; was convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and joined the Methodist Society in Hallam, 1761, when Mr. Tizzard was in the neighbourhood, and when there were only about twelve members in Society at Hallam.

It was some time in the course of this year, that Elizabeth Booth became acquainted with experimental religion, and led the way to another favourite Methodist station, namely, Woodseats, about three miles south of Sheffield,—a place frequently visited by Mr. WESLEY, and whose chief importance consisted in being a kind of retreat from the violence of persecutors in more populous places, and a constant home for the preachers. She was born in the year 1725; her maiden name was Wood, and she was the daughter of Stephen and Isabella

Wood, of Summerly, near Dronfield, Derbyshire. She was the subject of serious impressions from her childhood, and regularly attended the service of the Established Church at Norton. Her impressions were deepened under the ministry of David Taylor; but it was not till the year of her marriage to Mr. Jonathan Booth, of Norton Woodseats, Derbyshire, who had a small farm there, that she possessed the consolations of religion, which was about the eighteenth of her age. The opposition which she first met with from her husband, who, through the persuasion of his relatives, threatened to turn her out of doors, was considerable. Though she brought him a fortune, he would not, on the testimony of a daughter, suffer her to have a halfpenny in her possession to his knowlege, and she frequently contributed to her class by the saving of a farthing at a time. She generally attended preaching at Sheffield at five o'clock in the morning, carrying the child in her arms that she was then nursing. Through her perseverance and exemplary conduct she at length so won upon him, as to suffer preaching to be established in the house; and through some severe affliction in the family, he was brought to serious reflection, and lived in the fear and love of God several years. She led a class in the neighbourhood, attended the different prayer-meetings which were established in the villages and hamlets around, and often gave a word of exhortation. In many of her religious excursions she went as far as Totley, Highlane, Penistone, and Staincross, the last of which places is about eighteen miles from Woodseats, and there prayed with the people, and there spake to them as she was able. Her house was the grand resort of all the first preachers, as the Messrs. WESLEY, Whitfield, Grimshaw, Nelson, and others; and among pious females, Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, Mrs. Crosby and Miss Hosmer, of Leeds. Whenever Mr. WESLEY visited Woodseats during the summer season, he almost invariably went to the brook, now called the London river, near Heeley, and bathed himself,—a recreation conducive to health, and to which he was very partial.

Norton, near Woodseats, was one of those places in which several early attempts were made to form a Soci-



ety. Two of the first members were Hannah Bramley and Dorothy Bingham, both of whom died in peace at a good old age—one of them betwixt 90 and a 100. There seems to be a striking coincidence, in many cases, between the introduction and reception of Christianity and Methodism in various places;—females distinguishing themselves among its first embracers, and, by the influence of their conversation and example, among the first of its propagators.

## CHAP. V.

*The copy of a curious letter sent to the Archbishop of York—Part of Miss Lowly's correspondence—Local preachers—An instance of Mr. Wesley's extraordinary labours—Anecdote of David Taylor—Distribution of religious tracts—Mr. Grimshaw visits the neighbourhood—Death of Mr. Holmes, of Syke-house—Some account of George Story—Mr. Wesley preaches—Sheffield becomes the head of a circuit—Grace Bennet.*

1746. WHILE agents of good were on the increase, the agents of evil were far from slumbering on their arms. Open violence had been resorted to; the Established pulpits in Sheffield had been employed as vehicles of abuse; and the Magistrates had been induced to wink at the proceedings of the rioters. More effective measures became necessary, and the direct aid of still higher powers was solicited. But fraud, instead of force, was now to be employed. The following singular document, which shews the malice of the persecutors, and the reports of the day, was found in Rotherham church-yard, by one of Wm. Green's scholars, and laid, it is supposed, purposely in his way, that he might convey it to his master:—

“ My Lord,

“ In this parish, (although very extensive) we have not ten Roman Catholic families: but, my Lord, I am sorry to say, we have a considerable number of Methodists. These people owe their rise in this neighbourhood to one Lowly, late a dish-turner, and an inhabitant of Abberford, near Pontefract, who, for many years of his life, has been an avowed Papist. This man, by some means or other, was, about the year 1741, made steward to Mrs. Finch, of Thryborough. where he now lives, which employ has given him that influence, espe-

cially over the poorer sort of tenants belonging to this opulent lady, as to enable him but too successfully to corrupt the minds of the ignorant and unwary, and to seduce them from the Church. There are weekly meetings established in several parts of this parish, which occasion much disturbance, on account of the impious doctrines inculcated by the itinerant teachers of this sect, who, for the most part, are mechanics. One of these fellows, at two different meetings, which he held at Rotherham, in January last, declared to his audience, that God the Father had no power to remit the sins of men, no more power than he, the teacher, had. Of the truth of this blasphemous assertion, we have undoubted evidence. Others again openly vindicate the doctrine of transubstantiation, infallibility, with several other tenets of the Church of Rome. These proceedings, together with the unhappy differences and divisions they have made in several families, in and about Rotherham, makes it much to be wished, that some effectual method might be found out to suppress so dangerous a people, who glory in violating the laws both of Church and State."

This precious specimen of ignorance, bigotry, and spleen has been fortunately preserved among William Green's MSS., and is now presented to the Methodist public. It is possible, some may be almost led to doubt, that it is an exact copy of what Mr. Cleator, the clergyman, sent to the Archbishop of York, in answer to the queries prior to the visitation; but it is too well authenticated. This, in the estimation of its author, was, in its effects, to shake the whole system of Methodism; but it survived misrepresentation, as it had towered above the tempest raised by the spirit of persecution.

Mr. Lowly still maintained his integrity and his office; and his family attended to their improvement in piety. Miss Margaret Lowly, in a letter to her sister, dated October 26, 1746, says, "I hope your journey to London was to your satisfaction, and much blessed to your soul. I should have been glad to have been a partaker with you, of hearing the word, and conversing with the children of God. On the reception of your

letter, we were in the very act of rejoicing at the supposition of your hearing Mr. WESLEY, and of your receiving comfort, by the Spirit of God applying the word to your soul. O, consider how great the love of God is, lest ye grow weary and faint in your mind. I have many trials and temptations, but, through the mercy of God, I faint not; having this promise, that all things shall work together for good to them that love God." After many pious remarks, she then proceeds to comment on an observation of her sister. "You say, you have almost given over talking to people. Now, as this is a talent, which God has given you, O hide it not in the earth, for thereby you deprive both yourself and others of a blessing; for while we are talking of Him whom we love, does it not increase our love and strength? And though you do not see good done as yet, have faith in God. Cast your bread upon the waters, and it will return to you after many days; for who can tell what good it may do to their poor souls? And again, for our own parts, it is in some measure following the example of our Lord, who went about doing good. The poor man whom you mention has only two children, and they are very little ones; nor do I know of any other. I think it would be better for you to board somewhere. You would be more comfortable in your mind, and free from trouble. Mr. Trembath, if you recollect, gave you directions to a person at Bath, with whom you might board, and where you might have an opportunity of hearing the word preached, which would be rendered a great blessing to your soul. When I heard Miss Dodson was in Yorkshire, I went to Treeton to see her, but she was gone. May the peace of God rule in all our hearts!" &c. While this letter shews the devout frame of mind in which Miss Lowly was, it informs us that Mr. Trembath was either then, or had recently been labouring in the neighbourhood.

1747. An intimacy had taken place between Miss Margaret Lowly and a son of Mr. Johnson, of Barley Hall; and they were married in 1747. The bride was born December 2, 1719, and the bridegroom September 20, 1719. On their marriage they went to reside at Hoyland, where they opened their door for preaching.



From these, the present Barlows of Sheffield sprung, their mother, the late Mrs. James Barlow, being daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, of Hoyland, and granddaughter to the Johnsons of Barley Hall. Methodism, therefore, from the first, seems to have been hereditary in the family. It was not long after the union of Miss Lowly and Mr. Johnson, that the officiating clergyman of Wentworth was pleased to propagate a report which had been invented by the malevolent. The Marchioness of Rockingham, who highly respected the family, made it her business to inquire into its credibility; and finding it false, her ladyship embraced the first opportunity of rebuking his reverence for the part which he took in it. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were capable of living down every report incompatible with Christianity. Their hearts were open to admit the truth, and their house was always open to its ministers. It was at their house, that John Nelson was confined some time, when ill of an intermitting fever. On the day that he was free from an attack, he sent Mr. Johnson's servants to invite the people in the neighbourhood to the house, and preached to them.

As the preachers, whose province it was to labour in what was called the "Leeds round," at this period, preached also at Sheffield, it is very likely that Mr. Christopher Hopper visited these parts. He preached at Birstal, where as yet there was no "preaching-house."\*

Persons, who, at this early period, acted in the capacity of local preachers, were in the habit of taking very long journeys, for the purpose of preaching the gospel. One of these men, was Wm. Nelson, brother to John Nelson, who was an instrument of great good, and under whom Mr. James North, of Rothwell, a local preacher about half a century, and who had a daughter resident in Sheffield, was awakened to a sense of his lost moral condition.† After Wm. Nelson had laboured in these parts some time, he, according to the statement of the present John Nelson, grandson of his brother John, went to the Isle of Portland, where he

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\* Meth. Mag. 1802, p. 396.

† Ibid. 1800, p. 197—201.

settled, and where it is feared he lost his religion: at least, he became lost to the family. Mr. North, however, supplied his lack of service, and frequently preached in Sheffield and the neighbourhood. This veteran died suddenly, in 1799, at Wakefield, where his daughter, Mrs. Froggatt, Eyre-street, Sheffield, had gone to meet him.\* While Wm. Nelson preached in these parts, he was useful. And had it not been for him, his brother John, Wm. Green, John Thorpe, and a few others, the places where Methodism was introduced, would have been but ill supplied. Relative to those who were entirely given up to the work, it might be demanded, "What are these among so many—so many places that have claims upon their time, their talents, and their exertions?" And Mr. WESLEY's circuit was too extensive to admit of more than one or two visits in the year; and sometimes not so many.

Thus, he omitted Sheffield on his way to the north this year, in the month of February, but called at Sykehouse, where he was "not a little comforted," and was met by Wm. Shent.† On his return, however, after taking a circuitous route, he preached, May 13, at noon, in the High Peak of Derbyshire, "and in the evening at Sheffield;" from whence, May 14, he rode to Barley Hall. As soon as he had done preaching at the latter place, Wm. Shent told him he had just left Leeds, where Mr. Perronet was in a high fever. Mr. WESLEY set off for Leeds at three the next morning, at which place he arrived between seven and eight; and through the blessing of God on the means employed, Mr. Perronet recovered from that hour. Mr. WESLEY being willing to redeem the time, preached at noon in Leeds, and then hastened back to Barley Hall, where he preached at seven, on "Glorify God with your bodies and your spirits, which are God's." Exclusive of preaching, walking, and other engagements, he had not less than 50 miles to ride on horseback: yet, abundant in his labours, he was seen the next day mounted again, passing through Sheffield, Chesterfield, Mansfield, Not-

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\* Meth. Mag. 1800, p. 197---201.

† Journals, vol. ii. p. 379.

tingham, and forward to Markfield\*, scattering his conversational blessings as he went along.

Notwithstanding a pretty full account has been given of David Taylor, he, in common with others, of whom an opportunity is embraced to furnish a brief history, at one view, will make his occasional appearance. He still itinerated, as will appear from what has been observed, though not now among the Methodists. In addition to his being benighted on the moors, near Bradfield, when alone, he met with a similar fate, in company with another person, on the mountains of Edale, near Castleton, in Derbyshire. It was in the depth of winter, and while the snow was falling very thick around them. After experiencing considerable fatigue and anxiety, they reached a house, knocked at the door, obtained admission, and began to shake the snow off their clothes. The man of the house expecting a neighbour, was both surprised and alarmed on seeing two strangers enter with some degree of freedom; and immediately took down his sword, which hung over the fire-place, among other armour, which had been employed by him as a train-band soldier, in the battle of Preston Pans, in 1745. With this weapon, he purposed to defend himself and his family, from men of whom he was apprehensive as being influenced by evil intentions. His fears were soon silenced by David stepping up to him, and saluting him with—"Peace be to this house." He found no need of his martial spirit; and being a man that feared God, he laid aside the soldier and took up the Christian; shook David heartily by the hand, and bid him welcome. His name was Joseph Hadfield. This is noticed as connected with the introduction of Methodism into Edale; for the Methodist preachers succeeded David, who often acted as a pioneer, and there has been preaching in the place, either less or more, ever since. While it may please some to know, it can give offence to no one, to observe, that in this very house, Mr. James Ridel, an old travelling preacher, was afterwards born and brought up. There is now a Methodist Chapel in Edale.

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\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 392.

Oral instruction was not the only means employed by the first Methodists to awaken the attention of the public to the importance of experimental and practical piety. So early as 1745, we find several thousands of little tracts distributed among the common people, in the course of one day, in the metropolis, by Mr. WESLEY.\* These messengers of mercy were widely circulated in this neighbourhood. Wm. Green, of Rotherham, had a book account opened with Mr. WESLEY in the former part of this year; and from some leaves having been torn out of the Memorandum book, it should seem, that an account had been opened much earlier. Down to the year 1779, there is a particular statement of all the books received from London; many of the parcels large, one weighing not less than 40 stone. Some of the tracts noted in the list for 1747, are "A Word of Advice to Saints and Sinners," 100 copies at a penny each; "Swear not at all," 40 copies at the rate of three for a penny; "Remember the Sabbath," price one half-penny; "Advice to a Methodist," one penny; "The Christian's Pattern," abridged; Mr. Grimshaw's Answer to a Sermon, published by Mr. White, which appeared for the first time before the public, and identified its author with the Methodist body, who, in the course of this year, was heartily united to Mr. WESLEY†. There are also other works, such as Law's "Serious Call," "Gloria Patriæ," &c. &c. calculated either to promote internal piety or the public worship of God. But there is another small publication, which appears to have had considerable circulation,—a publication which is now scarcely known in Methodism, and a copy of which never fell in the writer's way, viz. "Letters, by the Rev. CHARLES WESLEY." Whether these Letters were simply didactic, or whether they were controversial, is not for the writer to say. The selling price was threepence. There are a few particulars which force themselves upon us, when we view the subject generally. We see, 1. The vices most prevalent, from the nature of the tracts circulated, such as swearing, sabbath-breaking, &c. 2. The class of people to whom

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\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 328.

† Myles' Life of Grimshaw, p. 19.



Mr. WESLEY chiefly directed his attention, for the purpose of benefiting—the poor, the tracts being published in a cheap form to meet their circumstances. 3. Mr. WESLEY's anxious solicitude to preserve those whom he had gathered out of the world, in his advice to "Saints," and to a "Methodist." 4. His delight in promoting the harmony of the temple, in the music which he published. The distribution of these tracts, at a small price, answered all the purposes of the *Religious Tract Societies* now established, and it is creditable to the Methodists to have led the way.

Mr. Grimshaw, whose work has just been noticed, and who was united with the Methodists as far as a clergyman could be, now began to itinerate, and very often preached at High Green, about a mile from Thorncliffe. In addition to the services of his own church, at Howarth, and pastoral attention to his flock at home, he embraced the opportunity of preaching about 300 sermons annually to other congregations. He established two circuits, and Green Hill appears to have been in one of them. These circuits he visited, with only a few exceptions, once a fortnight, or every week alternately. One of these weeks, in which he seldom preached less than twelve or fourteen times, he pleasantly designated his idle week. His sermons, on his busy or laborious week, often exceeded twenty-four, and sometimes amounted to thirty.\* His constitution was good, his spirit fervent, his piety deep, and in the discharge of his clerical functions he was "in labours more abundant." The inhabitants of Howarth were afflicted, in 1763, with a putrid fever, which he caught in visiting his parishioners, and of which he died, April 7, the same spring, in the 55th year of his age, in great peace. Some intimations have been given, of his having visited Woodseats, as well as High Green; but perfect confidence can scarcely be reposed in them. It is not to be supposed, however, that a man of his zeal would travel so far from home, and regularly preach in a mere hamlet, for a succession

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\* Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 10, 11.

of years, about seven miles from Sheffield, without once entering the town to proclaim the gospel.

Previously to Mr. Grimshaw's coming to High Green, the way had been prepared by David Taylor and John Nelson, both of whom had preached there in 1745, if not earlier. The number in society is uncertain, but supposed not to be more than ten or twelve. The person who entertained the preachers, as already noticed, was one Mr. Joseph Smith, a farmer. He afterwards removed from thence, and left his son William in possession of the farm. Some time after this, William, together with some of the members, embraced Calvinistic sentiments, and introduced no small degree of confusion into the society; but the final stroke appears to have been given, by William marrying a female opposed to religion; in consequence of which, he abandoned his own religious profession, and again became a man of the world. Preaching was discontinued by the Methodists, and the little society was dispersed some time about the year 1765, two years after Mr. Grimshaw's death.

From the infancy of the work, there had scarcely, in the regular course of nature, been time for the different societies to sustain much loss through deaths. There were only a few occasional removals. John Nelson records one, in a letter to Mr. WESLEY, which was severely felt, and another only remarkable for connecting circumstances. "I heard nothing," says he, "of Brother Holmes's death, till I got to Norton. I believe God hath done more by him in his death than in all his life. I never saw the people at Syke-house so earnest. I preached at Norton, and there seems to be a revival there also; the death of Mr. Holmes hath stirred them also. He died a great witness for God. We have a great awakening in this place, too, occasioned by the death of an old gentleman, that was concerned in sending me for a soldier. About two months before he died, he sent for me, and I spake plain to him: he trembled and wept bitterly, and desired me to come again; and I found him under as great conviction as I ever saw a man. After my third visit he told me, God had visited him in great love. He continued to praise God, and

seemed sanctified in body, soul, and spirit. He desired me to preach over him : I did, and God laid his hand upon many that had been enemies before.”\* What a triumph for Christianity ! How eminently was good returned for evil !

Of Mr. Holmes, whose death John Nelson simply notices, it may be proper to say a little more. He was a branch of an ancient family, whose ancestors came from Normandy with William the Conqueror. The oldest branch of it, (now nearly extinct,) enjoy considerable estates in Holderness, which were granted to them by that prince. Mr. Holmes was a respectable farmer, and joined the Methodist society some time about the year 1740. He was a zealous local preacher, and was an active agent in promoting the interests of that gospel, which he had experienced to be the power of God to his own salvation. He endured great persecution for the testimony of a good conscience. On one occasion he was confined in the stocks, and on another sent on board of a tender at Grimsby. He was a burning and shining light; but his life was short, and, for its brevity, was like the meteor shooting along the face of the heavens, giving light indeed, but suddenly disappearing. His death, which possessed more of triumph than composure, was occasioned by a cold which he caught while in the exercise of his ministerial labours. He left a widow and four children ; but the Lord was a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. The loss sustained by the children in the death of the father, was, in a great degree, compensated by the excellencies of the mother. She was a woman of genuine piety of heart, of singular propriety of conduct, and of the most active industry in her domestic concerns. She continued to receive the preachers into her house, and God graciously blessed their prayers, advice, and example to the family. She lived a widow thirty years, and then died happy in the Lord. Mr. Robert Holmes, the eldest son, became serious at a very early period in life, and sustained the respective offices of class-leader, trustee, and circuit-steward, with credit to himself and use-

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\* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 530.

fulness to the society. He died April 13, 1810; and his death, as his life, was attended with all that characterizes the Christian. March 12, he sat down with an intention to write some letters of instruction and advice to his children, but before he had completed one letter, he had occasion to go out on some business, when his foot slipped, he fell down, and broke his leg. It proved a compound fracture: and in consequence of a bilious complaint, he had been previously brought very low, and his nervous system was much shaken; but grace was given for the day. When he was interrogated on the state of his mind, he said, "I am a sinner saved by grace; I rest in Christ Jesus; *there is support and comfort only in Him.*" He took Mr. Laycock by the hand, who was the person that spoke to him, and kissed it several times, and said, "You see I am an *old man*, I must *die*;" further observing, "Jesus is my refuge. *All is well.*"\* The Methodist preachers have now been kindly entertained by the family, *free of all expense*, upwards of *eighty* years, and still continue to visit them. Indulging a faint hope, that some memorials of the work of God might be preserved in the family, inquiry was made, and the following note was received:—

"Sir,

"I have made inquiry in the family, but cannot meet with any letters or papers from either Mr. WESLEY, John Nelson, or any of the old preachers; nor any facts relative to the introduction of Methodism to Syke-house.

"Your's respectfully,

"PAUL HOLMES."

"Syke-house, July 18, 1821."

1748, Several places were visited by the preachers in the immediate neighbourhood of Sheffield, which, after trying for a considerable time, they were obliged to abandon for a season. Ecclesfield was one of them, which had preaching in 1748, and where great opposition was raised. Than Ecclesfield, few places stood more in need, not only of evangelizing, but of civilizing.

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\* Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 626, 627.



Bear-beatings, and other brutal amusements were common both during the week and on the Lord's day. After having been engaged once the greater part of the Sabbath in this work, the animal broke loose, and entered a house where a female had been recently confined. The infuriated creature tore the breasts of the mother, and killed the infant by her side, the mother herself dying of the wounds soon after. This dreadful catastrophe put a check to the practice for a season; but still the village was deemed the Sodom of all the neighbouring places. A happy moral change has taken place principally through the instrumentality of the Methodists; and religion is prospering both in the Establishment and among the Dissenters. In addition to the Parish Church, the Methodists and Independents have each a chapel. At the time alluded to, partly through persecution, and partly from a want of ministerial fruit, the preachers withdrew their labours several years. But though prospects bore rather a sombre tinge in some parts, some tints of light relieved the scene in others.

Mr. George Story, who was born at Harthill, a few miles from Sheffield, in the year 1738, and was now in the 10th year of his age, observes, "God began to revive his work of grace in and about Sheffield; the rumour of which spread into our village, and occasioned serious reflections in the minds of many. One evening, as I was hearkening to the conversation of my parents on that subject, I was struck with an observation they made, That prayer was nothing, unless the mind was stayed upon God. At night, when I repeated my customary prayers, I watched my thoughts narrowly, and soon found that they wandered from the Lord all the time. This discovery deeply affected me; I strove with all my might to think on God as being present, seeing and hearing me; and after repeated efforts, through grace, I prevailed." After noticing his attention to his Bible, a book which he had read several times through, before he was six years of age, and his observance of the Establishment, he continues, "I endeavoured to cast my soul upon the Lord in the best manner I was able, and at times was persuaded he had forgiven all my

trespasses. Though I had never heard any of the Methodist preachers, yet from that time I felt an esteem for them; and notwithstanding they were loaded with all manner of reproach, and represented in the most detestable light, these calumnies only increased my regard for them, because I understood, (having read, previous to this, the History of the Sufferings of the Protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, and other works,) that true Christians, in all former ages, had met with the same treatment from the world.\* It should seem from hence, that, though the members of Society were calumniated, the work of God still prospered: and this is characteristic of the Church of God in every place; the more she is oppressed, the more she flourishes.

Friday, July 1, Mr. WESLEY remarks, "I rode to Sheffield, and preached in the evening, at the end of the house, to a quiet congregation:" and further observes, on the 8th, "About noon I preached at Sykehouse: the little society here also seemed to partake of the general revival."† The united testimony of Mr. Story and Mr. WESLEY, on the subject of the revival, is pleasing; and it must have been attended with some striking circumstances, to become the subject of general conversation.

1749. It was not till 1749, that Sheffield was considered a circuit town, or more properly, the head of a circuit.‡ The revival just noticed, might possibly lead to it; for it is natural to suppose, as the work extended, greater attention would be paid to the places. When Sheffield was thus considered a central station, there were only *twenty* circuits in England. Prior to this, it was in the Leeds circuit, from whence the preachers came, and stopped a short time, visiting the adjacent places. We are not to associate, however, with Sheffield, the modern comforts of a circuit town, in the early stages of Methodism. In the highly instructive and interesting memoir of Mr. C. Hopper, it is observed, "In those days, we had no provision made for preachers' wives, no funds, no stewards. He that had a staff,

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\* Meth. Mag. 1782, p. 14, 15, 16, 17; in a memoir of him, written by himself. † Journals, vol. ii. p. 443, 445. ‡ Minutes of Conf. vol. i. p. 40. 8vo. edit.

might take it, go without, or stay at home.”\* The preacher then, as in a small country place now, took up his residence with some of the friends in Sheffield, where he only tarried a few days. Indeed, some years after this, the *letters* were not, as now, directed to the preacher at the “Methodist Chapel,” but to the care of some of the principal friends, as “Mr. Wainwright,” or “Mr. J. Rider, Fargate,” or to be left “at the Rev. J. WESLEY’s Lodgings, Sheffield.” We must associate with the joys of Sheffield, therefore, as the head of a circuit, what is experienced by an army, when, during march, they are favoured with a “halt-day.” There was a short pause from travelling; but it was a rest accompanied with pulpit exertion, and soon succeeded by long and painful journeys.

Though there were both Band and Class Meetings in Sheffield several years prior to this, it is difficult to ascertain where they were held. One of the classes, in 1749, met in a house at the bottom of Silver-street, No. 2, now in the occupation of the daughter and son-in-law of Luke and Lydia Staniforth, of which class Luke and Lydia were the first members, and in which house they lived and died—died full of years, and ripe with religious fruit. Thomas Colley, who united with the society of Friends, and became an eminent speaker among them, and whose descendants are now with that religious body, was afterwards the leader. John Butler, Henry Alsop, and Robert Glover were members of Society at the time, and probably of the class.

Considerable as had been the revival the year preceding, Sheffield itself was not equally benefited by it with other places; nor were her privileges much increased. Mr. G. Story, who continued nearly in the state in which he was left in 1748, and looking back, in 1782, upon the present period of the history, in 1749, says, “The Methodists (in Sheffield) were few and feeble, and had seldom any travelling preachers: I sometimes attended their prayer-meetings, and often followed them up and down the town, hoping they would turn and speak to me; but no one took any notice of me.”

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\* Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 90.

He continues, "One day hearing a preacher was to be there, I attended; but he did not come. Upon this, one of the local preachers, who was then a Calvinist, gave an exhortation."\* This preacher broached some of the peculiarities of his creed, which tended not a little to unsettle the mind of his young auditor.

On Monday, Sept. 4th, Mr. WESLEY was at Sykehouse, where he stayed all night.† It was either during this visit, or that of the year preceding, when Mr. Saml. Birks gave Mr. WESLEY the meeting, and first saw Grace Murray. The life of this remarkable woman, which has been already referred to, as written by her son, is well worthy of perusal. She formed a conspicuous figure in the early part of Methodism. She was born in or near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, January 23d, 1715. Her maiden name was Norman. About the year 1736, she was married to Mr. Alexander Murray, nearly related to a considerable family of that name in Scotland. He died at sea, and left her a young widow. She was savingly converted to God about the 23rd year of her age; and was made a band and class-leader soon after by Mr. WESLEY. During her widowhood, she travelled, by Mr. WESLEY's direction, through several of the northern counties, to meet and regulate the female societies. She went over into Ireland for the same purpose, where she continued three or four months; and at her return thence, travelled from Bristol, through the southern and eastern counties, back to Newcastle; where, Oct. 3rd, 1749, she was married, in the parish-church of St. Andrew's, to Mr. John Bennet, the convert of David Taylor, in the presence of the Rev. George Whitfield and the Rev. CHARLES WESLEY.‡ We find Mr. Whitfield in the north about that time, and John Bennet seems to have left the north immediately after his marriage.§ Few characters were more esteemed throughout the whole of the Methodist connexion than Grace Murray, and in real usefulness equalled, in her sphere, most of the preachers. Mr. WESLEY was wont to call her his "right hand," and there is reason to believe that he intended

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\* Meth. Mag. 1782, p. 17, 18.    † Journals, vol. iii. p. 6.  
 her Life.    § Mr. Wesley's Journals, vol. iii, p. 14, 15, 16.

‡ See



to have married her; but she was destined to move elsewhere. It is not improbable, that she was on her return from Ireland, when Mr. Samuel Birks was first introduced to her. She was in company with Mr. WESLEY, some of the preachers, and several friends. On the morning she left Syke-house, Mr. Birks was not a little surprised, at the manner of her exit. When she came to the side of the animal, and found, by a glance of the eye, every thing right, she laid her hand on his shoulders; that instant he dropped on his knees; she immediately mounted—the horse rose when she was fairly seated—she waved her hand—touched the rein—rode off—and suddenly disappeared—leaving those behind her, looking at each other in a state of astonishment.

## CHAP. VI.

*Edward Perronet—Notes of admission—Conversion of Sarah Moore—The first Quarterly Meeting—Miss Holmes's marriage—Instances of the persecuting spirit and conduct manifested to Wm. Green—Wm. Darney—Place of preaching altered—Mr. Wesley preaches—A singular account of Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats—New ground broken up—Wm. Brammah begins to preach.*

1749. ONE of the preachers who laboured here at this period, and whose name has been preserved through a note of admission into Society, was Mr. Edward Perronet. The note was written, from whence it may be inferred, that, either he was not in possession of a printed one, or that the press had not then been employed for that purpose. Its contents were, "Thursday, Oct. 26, 1749, Soci. Admit Sarah Moore. Edwd Perrot." with a private mark at one of the corners. Edward was brother to Charles Perronet, and possessed equal powers with him; to which was superadded a large fund of wit. He commenced his itinerant labours in 1747, and desisted for want of piety in 1778.\* He resided at Canterbury, and there preached to a small congregation of Dissenters. Though the son of a clergyman, he is said to have been a notorious enemy to the hierarchy of the Church of England; and sometimes employed his pen in satirizing it. He was the author of an anonymous poem, entitled, "The Mitre;" which is generally supposed to have been one of the keenest satires on the National Establishment that was ever written. It was printed, but the publication of it was suppressed; some suppose, through the influence, and at the request, of Mr. J. WESLEY. Edward Perronet died at Canterbury,

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\* Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 449; and Atmore's Meth. Mem. p. 335.

about the year 1791. He was brought to a deeply serious and humble temper, during his last illness, and, through the mercy of God, died as he should have lived.

The young person whom he admitted into Society, was born in Lynn, in Norfolk, 1738, which place she left, with her parents, when four years of age. She was now in her 11th year. In the 17th year of her age she began to teach a school in Sheffield, residing with her mother; and in her 18th, she was appointed, as the first leader, to the first class in Hallam. Thither she walked from Sheffield during all sorts of weather, for the space of two years, when she delivered it up to Benjamin Kirkby, one of its first members, who was deemed by that time sufficiently established in grace to conduct it, and who gave full proof of his integrity and perseverance by leading it nearly forty years. Her daughter, (for Sarah was married to Samuel Knutton, in 1772,) who is housekeeper to Mr. Wardlow, of Fulwood, grandson to the gentleman who first took in David Taylor, takes no small pleasure in shewing to a friend, an old oak table, of an oval form, round which about six persons may sit, on which the first quarter-day dinner was served, and which afforded ample room for preachers, stewards, and leaders. This, though apparently trifling, shews us the day of small and feeble things; the vast contrast between the first quarterly meeting held in a private dwelling, in Fargate, and a quarterly meeting now held in Carver-street Vestry, composed of from sixty to eighty persons, and these persons but a small portion of the official characters, and occupying a still smaller portion of ground, when contrasted with the extent of the circuit in 1749. Some antiquaries have manifested a greater partiality to things of less value, and would not hesitate to request, that such an article might be deposited in Carver-street Vestry, to remind the members of the meeting of former times, and to be handed down to posterity as an heir-loom to the Methodist Quarterly Family. In this, the antiquary would be joined by many others, and by no one more than —. The first quarterly meeting was held in the house of Sarah Moore; the time is uncertain, but probably sometime between 1756 and 1760.

Wm. Green, who had laboured hard to introduce Methodism into Rotherham, Thrybergh, Brinsworth, and other places, was equally solicitous to extend and establish it. In the case of Rotherham, where he resided, and taught a school, he found it difficult. His first wife, to whom he was married in 1740, and by whom he had four children, died June 26, 1747. Two of the children, who survived the mother, were put out to nurse; and to avoid all occasion of slander, with which the Methodists were plentifully bespattered, he had no female in the house. A few persons in Masbro' and Rotherham, not amounting to more than a dozen, having no convenience of their own for class-meeting and preaching, and wishful to unite in church-fellowship, advised him again to enter the marriage-state, that they might meet in his house for Christian communion. They directed his attention to Miss Jane Holmes, of Sheffield, who was well known to the whole of the little Societies around, which she visited for the purpose of hearing preaching, holding prayer-meetings, and declaring the goodness of God to her soul, and was held in the highest esteem for her prudent zeal and exemplary conduct. Wm. Green's heart had been somewhat inclined that way, and he spoke to her on the subject. For this she was not altogether prepared. She had fixed it in her mind, not to marry, that she might have greater liberty to see her friends in the country, whose salvation she laboured to promote. She saw too, that those females who had husbands, very often missed their way, either by too great a partiality to them, or by the indulgence of anxious care, and doubted whether the marriage-state would admit of the same piety to God as a single life. Above all, she was surprised, that a man of Wm. Green's acknowledged sanctity should think, as he was in part free, of encumbering himself again with domestic cares, and, as she highly esteemed him, felt sorry on his account. Two or three young men had, previous to this, sought to gain her affection, but without the smallest encouragement; especially one of the name of T. Radcliffe, a person of considerable connexions and expectations. The conversation of Wm. Green seemed to impress her mind. When she awoke



in the morning, it was present with her. She consulted the sacred records on the subject of marriage; poured out her soul to God in prayer for direction; and sought the advice of her band-mates, and of her mother, still inclining to a single life. She saw, that the Bible encouraged marriage both in a paradisaical and a Christian state; her mother, who wished her married, but from whom she anticipated the greatest opposition to Wm. Green, was perfectly passive; the Society, and especially her band-mates, both of whom could but ill spare her, as she was a class-leader, thought, as there was no regular preaching at Rotherham, that the Lord might intend her to move in a sphere of usefulness elsewhere; and her health, which had been in a precarious state, got more and more established. She suffered a year, however, to pass over, before she would communicate with him on the subject, or give him any encouragement. intimating that both should continue to make it matter of prayer to God. They corresponded by letter, except on the Lord's day, when, as he had been accustomed to do for want of preaching at Rotherham, he attended Sheffield. They were at length united in marriage, Dec. 27, 1749. On this, Mr. T. Radcliffe left Sheffield, and went to reside in the south. The prudence manifested on this occasion, as well as piety, for she added fasting to prayer, was characteristic of Mrs. Green's character through life, and is held up as an example to others.

She now entered upon a new scene; she left her dear friends at Sheffield, with whom she had long taken sweet counsel; much was expected from her, and she was not a little discouraged. But the Lord graciously visited her; preaching was established in the house, and sinners were converted to God.

This account, taken in substance from a MS., in Mrs. Green's own hand-writing, will enable us to correct an error which has found its way into the Minutes of Conference. In answer to a question in the Minutes of Nov. 16, 1749, relative to chapels, it is said, "Build, if possible, in the form of the Rotherham house."\*

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\* Vol. i. p. 41.

There must either have been an error in the date, or the name of the place; for, from other written documents of Wm. Green's, who had the principal management of it, the old octagon preaching-house, which was the first, was not built till 1761, till which period there was preaching in Wm. Green's house or school. So far as Dec. 27, 1749, he was obliged to attend service at Sheffield, which would not have been the case, had there been a preaching-house in Rotherham. The preaching which Rotherham little society had, if indeed it may be called a Society previous to this period, was chiefly given them by the local preachers, the names of only two of whom have been preserved, viz. John Thorpe, and Wm. Green himself. William kept a horse for the purpose of riding to distant places on the Lord's day, and during the vacation of his school. In his accounts, he was very particular; and it appears from them, that his horse was in pretty full employ, with himself and others, in journeys to Eckington, Barley Hall, High Green, Syke-house, and even Epworth, in the course of the year. It should seem too, from the number of glaziers' bills, and the manner in which some of them are expressed, that, from 1747 to 1749, the mob had made very free with his windows. But he was one of those, whose whole conduct was a comment on, "None of these things move me."

1750. After his marriage to Miss Holmes, his house was the general resort of the pious, and the home of the preachers. His good wife and himself, made it their study to promote the interests of their fellow-creatures, and they may be properly denominated the Parents of the Rotherham Methodist Society. But in proportion as increasing exertions were made, persecution, the foulest blot on human nature, raged. Two or three instances shall suffice at the present period of the history. On one occasion, when the mob assembled, which was not unfrequently the case when he passed along the street, some of the most ferocious caught him by the hair, and dragged him through the most conspicuous parts of the town. A person of the name of Richard Robinson, who stood as a spectator, while the furious persecutors passed, said within himself, "There

must be something in religion, and in that man, which I possess not, that enables him to endure the whole with such lamb-like patience." Though Wm. Green experienced the pain, Robinson derived the advantage; for he was convinced, from the circumstance of his own want of personal piety, met soon after in William's class, and lived and died a worthy member of the Methodist Society.

He was assailed by his enemies on another occasion, and took shelter in the house of Mr. Valentine Radley, a currier, in Rotherham, who was also a member of Society, and subscribed £20 towards the erection of the chapel in 1761. The mob continued to increase in number and in violence, till, through their threatenings, Mr. Radley was obliged to shut up his shop-windows. The doors and windows were no sooner closed, than those on the outside began to force them open, and threatened if the owner did not send out the object of their vengeance, they would pull the house down. Mr. Radley was in a strait between two, the preservation of his property and the preservation of his friend. He knew that those without were able to force the doors and windows, that they were perfectly disposed to do it, and that they would do within doors what they wished to do in the streets, with the probability of additional injury to his own person. On the other hand, Wm. Green was unwilling that any one should sustain any loss through him, and having confidence that God was able to protect him, he ventured out. The situation of the door was suitable for the purpose, at least it appeared so to the writer when examined. There was a free passage through a part of the building from the back to the front part of the town. In this passage the door opened into the house, and here a few of the persons were collected, to whom he appears scarcely to have been known, while the ring-leaders were employed at the front of the house, with shop-windows and door. The house-door was opened, William stepped out in haste, exclaiming, with a hurried step, and in a hurried tone, "Make way, make way there." The people barely made him a passage to squeeze through, he was soon at the skirts of the crowd, and the cry was heard

by the most active, who themselves were hemmed in by spectators and others, "He is gone!" They immediately commenced the chase; but by running through the streets, lanes, and fields, he eluded their grasp.

The enemies of God, however, still kept their eye upon him, and embraced every opportunity of venting their rancour of spirit. It was not abroad barely, but at home, that he was the butt of their indignation. It was about the same time that they broke his windows, and forcibly entered his house. He, in the interim, had made his escape by the back-door. Supposing him to have made his debut thence, they followed him through the house, and searched the back part of the premises and the garden. From the situation of the place, and the watch they had kept, they knew that the only part for flight was the bottom of the garden, which, when examined, seeing that the river ran close past it, was highly improbable, if not impossible, unless he were dextrous at swimming. After many fruitless attempts to find him themselves, they at length procured some hounds to track him. The hounds actually went round and round the spot where he was concealed by the foliage, without manifesting the smallest signs of any thing being there, except vegetable life. It was finally concluded, that he had crossed the river, and they withdrew, in some measure gratified with the supposed drenching he had received. It is not surprising that he should maintain a kind of superstitious fondness for the principal tree, which, like the oak that preserved King Charles, sheltered him from the violence of his pursuers, and would never suffer it to be cut down. It was at no great distance from this period too, that Wm. Shent preached in Rotherham, and narrowly escaped being thrown into a draw-well, through the kindness of a gentleman of some respectability, who opened his door for him, into which he quietly slipped, and so was lost by the mob.

It may appear a little singular how, in the midst of so much opposition, Wm. Green was able to support a school. This is explained, when it is known, that his persecutors were chiefly the most profligate part of the poor, who had neither disposition nor ability to give



their children a proper education; and that among the higher and middling classes of people, there were many, who, though not favourable to his religion, were partial to him as a teacher of youth. He had a happy method of bringing on such as were under his care in their learning; and hence, his school was always full. Particular attention was paid to their morals also: and whatever Mr. Cleator might do in 1746, Mr. Lloyd, the officiating clergyman in Rotherham, had generosity enough, in 1775, to inform the Archbishop of York, when he came to confirm the children, that those under the tuition of Wm. Green were the most perfect of any presented to him in their instructions. Mr. Walker's children were taught by him.

In the midst of the persecution experienced by her daughter and son-in-law, Mrs. Marriott seems to have enjoyed the consolations of religion, and to have been much devoted to God. She observes in her diary, "Feb. 20, 1750, being the first day of Lent, I now renew my covenant with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and through the aid of the Holy Spirit, make a full surrender of myself, and all that I have, to my Heavenly Father, renouncing my own righteousness, and casting myself, soul and body, on the merits of my crucified Redeemer, who knoweth the thoughts and intents of my heart: and to this I set my hand and seal." Her own signature follows, with an impression of some melted sealing-wax. If this were more frequently practised in private, it would be the means of additional pious feeling, and consequent stability of character.

A proper Methodist class-meeting was organized and established in Rotherham, and some of the monies collected, amounting to 2s. 4d., lodged in the hands of Wm. Parkin. This is noticed with a view to shew, that what was introduced at Bristol\*, had become general, and that the people were no sooner benefited by the gospel, than they directed their attention to its support. Mr. Timothy Gothard, who died at Hunslet, near Leeds, in the 83d year of his age, attended the public meetings at Rotherham at this period, and would have

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\* Mr. Wesley's Works, vol. xv. p. 331.

joined the society, had it not been for his wife, who was much prejudiced against the Methodists. He made a good finish in 1805.\*

1751. In Wm. Green's book account, it appears that Wm. Darney laboured in these parts, in 1751, whose signature stands to some circuit matters. Such was the poverty of most of the members in the Rotherham society, that several of them subscribed for hymn-books, and paid the money by instalments. The hymn-books were in all probability such as Wm. Darney himself had published; for a small volume was published by him, together with a volume of sermons, on the leading doctrines of the gospel. He was instrumental in raising several societies in the north of England, which for some time went by the name of Wm. Darney's societies. He was intimately acquainted with Mr. Grimshaw, of Howarth, and was rendered peculiarly useful to him in the commencement of his Christians course. He was a native of Scotland, rather eccentric, but generally deemed pious. He finished his course in peace, in the year 1780.

1752. After an absence of upwards of two years, Mr. WESLEY again visited Sheffield, Monday, April 13, 1752, where he preached "in the shell of the new house." "All," says he, "is peace here now, since the trial at York. Surely the magistrate has been the minister of God to us for good!"† Whether this trial had any connexion with the building pulled down by the rioters, in 1746, when the magistrates refused to act, and where "the shell of the new house" stood, is uncertain. It is conjectured, however, that, if it were finished, and occupied in the course of the year, it must have been situated somewhere towards the further end of Orchard-street, formerly called Brinceworth's Orchard; for William Woodhouse, of Hallam, heard preaching there about this time. The place, he observed, was like a dwelling-house; but this was the general form of all the first Methodist preaching-houses in Sheffield. Wm. W. was not then in connexion with the body, and, of course, unable to enter into any circumstantial account. After his marriage in 1749, he was in the

\* Meth. Mag. 1806, p. 326.

† Journals, vol. iii. p. 115.

habit of carrying milk into Sheffield, and supplying the family of John Butler with it, but omitting one day to come into town, through indisposition, he was asked the reason of his absence. Finding affliction to be the cause, John Butler embraced the opportunity of speaking to him on the subject of personal religion, and pressed him to attend preaching. He prepared for service on the Lord's day morning, and told his wife he hoped to hear a good sermon that day. Having observed him to be unusually pensive, and being a little suspicious from some words which he had dropped, that he was going to hear the Methodists, she cautioned him against it, and intimated that she should be happy to see him attend Church, or go any where indeed, rather than among such a people. He made no positive declaration of his intentions, but nevertheless attended, and heard a Methodist preacher for the first time. And here the Society seems to have worshipped, either in Thomas Prince's, till the "shell" was finished; or, if the identical "shell" was completed, till the removal to Mulberry-street.

Mr. WESLEY passed the night at Sheffield, and says, "Tuesday 14, I went to B——, whence the Vicar, Mr. D——, had sent a messenger on purpose, to desire he might see me. I found him in deep distress for the loss of his wife, mixed with strong desires after God. Hearing I was going to preach at Rotherham, he offered to go with me. He seemed to stagger at nothing; though, as yet, his understanding is not opened. O that he may not rest till it is!"\* This appears to have been Mr. WESLEY's first visit to Rotherham, and for this, William Green and his good wife, had made every preparation. He was at Syke-house, May 21, the year following.†

1753. At the close of this year, and through part of 1753, a daughter of Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, formerly called Woodsets, was singularly afflicted; and this was probably one of the domestic calamities which brought Jonathan to serious reflection. "June 5th, 1753," says Mr. WESLEY, "I rode over to Jonathan Booth's at Woodseats, whose daughter had been ill in

\* Journals, vol. iii. p. 115.

† Ibid. p. 156.

a very uncommon manner. The account her parents gave of it was as follows:—

“About the middle of December, 1752, Elizabeth Booth, junior, near ten years old, began to complain of a pain in her breast, which continued three days. On the fourth day, in a moment, without any provocation, she began to be in a vehement rage, reviling her mother, and throwing at the maid what came next to hand. This fit continued near an hour. Then in an instant she was quite calm. The next morning she fell into a fit of another kind, being stretched out, and stiff as a dead carcase. Thus she lay about an hour. In the afternoon she was suddenly seized with violent involuntary laughter; and she had some or other of these fits several times a day, for about a month. In the intervals of them she was in great heaviness of soul, and continually crying for mercy: till one Saturday, as she lay stretched out on the bed, she broke out, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ Her faith and love increased from that time: but so did the violence of her fits also: and often while she was rejoicing and praising God, she would cry out, ‘O Lord!’ and losing her senses at once, lie as dead, or laugh violently, or rave and blaspheme.

“In the middle of February she grew more outrageous than ever. She frequently strove to throw herself into the fire, or out of the window. Often she attempted to tear the Bible, cursing it in the bitterest manner. And many times she uttered oaths and blasphemies, too horrid to be repeated. Next to the Bible, her greatest rage was against the Methodists, Mr. W. (WESLEY) in particular. She frequently told us where he was, and what he was then doing: adding, ‘He will be here soon:’ and at another time, ‘Now he is galloping down the lane, and two men with him.’ In the intervals of her fits she was unusually stupid and moped, as if void of common understanding: and yet sometimes broke out into vehement prayer, to the amazement of all that heard.

“Sometimes she would strip herself stark naked, and run up and down the house, screaming and crying,



‘Save me, save me. He will tear me in pieces.’ At other times she cried out, ‘He is tearing off my breasts; he is pouring melted lead down my throat. Now I suffer what the martyrs suffered. But I have not the martyrs’ faith.’

“She frequently spoke as if she was another person, saying to her father, ‘This girl is not thine, but mine. I have got possession of her, and I will keep her:’ with many expressions of the same kind.

“She often seemed to be in a trance, and said she saw many visions: sometimes of heaven or hell, or judgment; sometimes of things which, she said, would shortly come to pass.

“In the beginning of March, Mrs. G. (Green) came over from Rotherham, who herself gave me the following account:—‘Soon after I came in, she fell into a raging fit, blaspheming and cursing her father and me.’ She added, ‘It was I that made Green’s horse so bad the other day;’ (which had been taken ill in a most unaccountable manner, as soon as he was put into the stable;) I did it that thou mightest have the preaching no more, and I had almost persuaded thee to it. It was I that made thee bad last night.’ I was then taken in an unusual way. All the time she spoke she was violently convulsed, and appeared to be in strong agony. After about a quarter of an hour, she broke out into prayer, and then came to herself, only still dull and heavy.’

“John Thorpe, of Rotherham, had often a desire to pray for her in the congregation. But he was as often hindered, by a strong and sudden impression on his mind, that she was dead. When he came to Woodseats, and began to mention what a desire he had had, the girl being then in a raging fit, cried out, ‘I have made a fool of Thorpe, and burst out into loud laughter.’

“In the beginning of May, all these symptoms ceased: and she continued in health both of body and soul.”\*

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\* Journals, vol. iii. p. 158—160,

The above is one of those cases of which Mr. WESLEY simply states the fact, of which he entertained his own private opinion, and left others, without reasoning upon it, to entertain theirs. In the same way it is dismissed on the present occasion, with the exception of one remark, which concerns the father of the girl. His hostility to the Methodists, noticed in a preceding page, increased a little prior to this afflictive dispensation of Providence; and increased so much too, as to induce him to ride about 40 miles, with a view to meet Mr. WESLEY, to request him to withdraw the labours of the preachers from Woodseats. The affliction in his family commenced immediately after; he himself viewed it as a judgment from God; recalled the preachers, and became, through it, a religious character. The young person was afterwards married to Mr. John Oliver, one of the preachers.

Mr. WESLEY had preached at Sheffield the evening before he visited Woodseats, which was on Monday. Tuesday seems to have been divided between the two places. On the Wednesday, he remarks, "It being still sultry hot, I preached under a shady tree at Barley Hall, and in an open place at Rotherham, in the evening." From thence he proceeded to Nottingham, where "God was greatly reviving his work, and pouring water upon the dry ground."

Ere this period, honest William Brammah had begun to exhort a little in Sheffield, his native place, and in the towns and villages around. He was at Potter-Hill and Burn-Cross, in the neighbourhood of Thorncliffe, in 1753, at the first of which places he told one of the members of Society, who probably had wished him to give the people something super-excellent, "He would preach like an archangel, he would do his best for the good of souls, and an archangel could do no more." A person of the name of Wm. Hoyland had preaching in his house at Potter-Hill, and another of the name of Edward Watson, originally from Bradford, opened his door for the Methodists at Burn-Cross.

Hunsfield, about six miles west of Sheffield, and two from Totley, was another of those small places which received the Methodists, chiefly through the instrumen-

talities of George Levick, a tailor, who yielded to the power of Divine grace, and lived in the village. This good man attended Divine service frequently at Beauchief Abbey, where he often met with Jonathan and Elizabeth Booth, and where a pious clergyman seems to have officiated at the time.

## CHAP. VII.

*Mr. Wesley preaches and meets the Society—Marquis of Rockingham attends preaching at Barley Hall—Mr. James Kershaw—Copy of a letter to a clergyman, and a dialogue between Wm. Green and the same—Ecclesfield—John Thorpe—The work of God in Derbyshire—Sheffield incorporated with Leeds—Persecution—Conversion of Wm. Woodhouse—Preaching at an Inn—Mr Wesley's Notes on the New Testament—The preachers in these parts—A painful Providence—Continued persecutions.*

1755. FROM the year 1753 to 1755, there is a complete dearth of information, both historical and traditional. This is partly accounted for by Mr. WESLEY. On "Thursday, June 12, 1755," he remarks, "at eight I preached at Clayworth, and at Rotherham in the evening. Here likewise was such a number of people assembled, as was never before seen in that town. Is not this one clear proof of the hand of God, that although the novelty of this preaching is over, yet the people flock to hear it in every place, far more than when it was a new thing? Friday 13th, in the evening I preached at Sheffield. In the morning I examined the members of Society, and was agreeably surprised to find, that though none had visited them, since I did it myself, two years ago, yet they were rather increased than diminished in number, and many of them growing in grace."\* They had been entirely dependant on their own resources.

Some time previous to this, the Marquis of Rockingham, his lady, and the present Earl Fitzwilliam's father, attended preaching at Mr. Johnson's, of Barley Hall. Their intention was known, and Mr. James Kershaw, a man of considerable talents, put forth all

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\* Journals, vol. iii. p. 205.



his mental energies on the occasion, probably with a view to roll away, as far as he could, the Methodistical reproach of *ignorance*. He unfortunately overshot the mark; they perceived an evident design at display, and were less satisfied than they would otherwise have been in hearing a plain sermon on the leading truths of Scripture. Mr. Kershaw commenced his itinerant labours, according to Mr. Myles, in 1752, and desisted in 1767\*; Mr. Atmore fixes the period of his relinquishing the itinerant life, 1757†; but what Mr. Myles probably gains, relative to the close of Mr. Kershaw's itinerant life, in point of correctness, he loses at the outset; for Mr. Samuel Birks heard him preach much earlier than 1752, at Barley Hall, in the character of a travelling preacher. Mr. Kershaw settled several years at Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire, where he continued in connexion with the Methodist body, and occasionally preached. His last residence was Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where he died. He wrote a Comment on the Book of Revelation, by way of Dialogue, which gives a favourable view of his abilities.

While others were labouring, Wm. Green, of Rotherham, was far from being idle. In addition to his pulpit exertions, he studied usefulness in private. The following is a letter which he sent to the Rev. — Wilkinson, of Barmber, July 27, 1755:—

“Reverend Sir,

“As you passed by yesterday, I thought it a pity that any of your cloth should be so ill employed as to spend your precious time in such foolish vanities as the horse-races. How much better would it have been, if you had been going from house to house in your parish, in order to reclaim the wicked, and instruct the ignorant, respecting the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, where he says, ‘No idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;’ or the words of Christ, Luke xiii. 3, ‘Except ye repent, ye

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\* Chron. Hist. p. 447. † Meth. Memor. p. 237.

shall all likewise perish.' To have done thus, would have been commendable in itself, the discharge of a duty incumbent upon you, and to profit others. As the Scripture says, 'Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy brother,' I thought it my duty to write a few lines to you in love, supposing that, if you were a person of sense and reason, you would not take it ill. If I make too free, or am wrong informed in my judgment, I hope you will reprove me kindly, and inform me better, and neither make sport of my good intent, nor of the Sacred Scriptures, which, if you will please to examine yourself by, will turn to your advantage. Propose to yourself such questions as these:—

"1. Am I now striving to enter in at the strait gate?

"2. Am I now working out my salvation with fear and trembling?

"3. Am not I now conforming to this world?

"4. Am I doing every thing, and *this* in particular, to the glory of God?

"5. Am I not setting my affections upon things of the earth?

"6. Do I believe that, for every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment?

"7. Am I fighting under Christ's banner?

"8. Am I renouncing the vanities of the world?

"Dear Sir, you will surely not evade these serious questions; or improperly apply the words of Solomon, where he says, 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;' you will not, I say, improperly apply these words, when you know what a thunder-clap follows, 'But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment?'

"Your's, &c.

"WM. GREEN."

The Reverend Gentleman was far from receiving the rebuke in the spirit of meekness; he regarded it as from an enemy, not a friend. William being a little desirous to know the effect produced by it, threw himself in his

way, when the following conversation took place, as recorded by himself:—

“ *W. Green.* Will you allow me to ask, Sir, whether you received a few lines lately?

“ *Clergyman.* Is your name Green?

“ *W. G.* Yes, Sir. Please to let us have a little conversation with each other.

“ *C. (With angry countenance,)* Pray, what business have you to meddle with me?

“ *W. G.* Dear Sir, be not out of temper. I only concluded it to be my duty to speak to you, knowing you to be a shepherd, and seeing you running astray, determined to reprove you, whether you would hear, or whether you would forbear; for the Bible authorizes us to rebuke sin before all men, and not to suffer sin upon one another.

“ *C.* You belong to a company of runagates; fellows who run up and down the country, deceiving the people, picking their pockets, pretending to preach the gospel, and yet are not legally called.

“ *W. G.* Hold, Sir. Legally called! If such are not legally called by having the Bishop's hand put upon them, I am inclined to think they are called of God. I can produce many in the town who, in time past, were notorious sinners, i. e. swearers, Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, adulterers, passionate, &c., who, through these illegal preachers, have become new creatures. Now, Sir, this work must either be of God or the devil: pray, tell me, to which of the two does it belong?

“ *C.* Undoubtedly, every thing that is good is of God.

“ *W. G.* Very well. Then *you* are legally called, and have been preaching to your congregation many years. How many drunkards have become sober, how many liars speak the truth, debauched persons have become chaste, and thieves have become honest, through your preaching? If you can produce but one who has become entirely changed, I shall not dare to say but you have been called of God, as well as of man. But if you have no seals of this kind to your ministry, I must take the freedom to tell you, that, although you are called of

man, you are not called of God, and though you scandalize others as picking the pockets of the people, I should be glad to hear you clear yourself of this charge, That you seek more for the *fleece* than the *flock*." Here the Dialogue unfortunately breaks off; but it terminates in a way which evidently shews, that it was W. Green's intention to have committed the whole to paper.

Derbyshire, as well as this part of Yorkshire, continued to experience the effects of the early labours of David Taylor and John Bennet; especially the village of Chelmorton, noticed in 1742, in connexion with Mr. John Marsden. Mr. Peter Jaco \* was labouring in these parts about this period, and was the instrument in the hand of God, when preaching at Chelmorton, of rousing the attention of Mr. George Marsden's mother to a serious concern for her salvation. Her maiden name was Buxton; she was the grand-daughter of Mr. John Buxton, a non-conformist, who, when in 1662, upwards of 2000 of the best and most learned of the clergy were forced from their churches by the Act of Uniformity, was one of those who gladly invited them to preach in his house: and the first who preached in it was the ejected minister of Glossop, the Rev. William Bagshaw, remembered still in Derbyshire by the name of the "Apostle of the Peak."†

As Miss Buxton's grandfather was returning one day from church, a circumstance occurred, which was eventually attended with so many blessed effects as to deserve recording. A violent storm arising on his return home, he was obliged to take shelter in the first house that presented itself. Entering into free conversation with the mother of the family, she candidly told him, that the apprenticeship of a son, who had been bound to a shoemaker, being expired, she was at a loss to know what to do with him. The benevolent and pious man resolved to assist them; and therefore offered, if the young man, whose name was Thomas Bennett,

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\* We find him in Yorkshire in 1754, when Derbyshire was connected with it; see Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 544. † See Calamy's Account of Ejected Ministers.



would be steady, to procure him leather, and provide a room in his house, for him to work in. This proposal was gratefully accepted, and the young man became, not only a respectable member of civil society, but a truly pious character. He it was who, by inviting the Methodists to Chelmorton\*, was, under God, the instrument of good to the family of his benefactor, since by the introduction of the gospel by the Methodist preachers into the village, the two grand-daughters of Mr. Buxton were brought to the knowledge of the truth. Thus did the merciful most truly obtain mercy, the kindness of the grandfather being more than repaid in the conversion of his children's children. The effects of this act of benevolence did not terminate here; for Miss Hannah Buxton, (afterwards Mrs. Marsden,) was rendered useful to the descendants of Mr. Thomas Bennett. His grandson, Mr. Thomas Lomas, many years a respectable steward of the society in Manchester, having settled in that town, became intimately acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. John Marsden during their residence there. Designing to visit his friends in Derbyshire, he called one day at Mr. M.'s previous to his setting out on his journey. Conversing with Mrs. M. on Divine subjects, he began anxiously to inquire what he must do to obtain a sense of God's love to his soul? She replied, "Believe in Jesus;" and earnestly pressed the necessity and earnestness of faith. This exhortation was rendered useful; for while he was travelling that evening, and reflecting upon what she had said to him, he was enabled to believe that Christ had loved him, and given himself for him, and thenceforward rejoiced in God his Saviour. Several years afterwards, when settled in London, she was exceedingly useful also to his son Robert, who became book-steward for the Connexion. The painful feelings of his mind under conviction for sin, though he was only about thirteen years of age, having brought him into such extreme debility of body that he was confined to his bed, and his death hourly expected, she was sent for to see him, and while she was praying with him, the Lord shed his love abroad in his heart, and

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\* John Bennet, as stated in 1742.

misery was exchanged for transport.\* Thus "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting: and his righteousness unto children's children."†

1756. Through the absence of Mr. WESLEY, and the travelling preachers, between 1753 and 1755, a change seems to have taken place relative to Sheffield, as the head of a circuit. We find it again incorporated with Leeds. Mr. Thomas Lee observes in a memoir of himself, "About this time, I had thirteen places where I preached at regularly. And I thought only of spending my life among them, when Mr. Grimshaw mentioned me to you (Mr. WESLEY.) You sent for me and asked, 'Whether I was willing to be a travelling preacher?' I said, Yes, if Mr. Grimshaw would supply my places; which he promised to do. That year I was most in the Birstal and Leeds circuit; the next in the Leeds circuit altogether, which then comprehended Sheffield and York also, extending into Derbyshire on the south, to Hull on the east, and on the north as far as Newton, under Roseberry-topping."‡

Another of the preachers, who appears to have laboured in these parts at this period, was Mr. Thomas Hanby, whose name stands in Wm. Green's book, as receiving monies from him, for works published by Mr. WESLEY, which monies he was to pay into the hands of Wm. Shent, of Leeds. This too, as well as the extract from Mr. Lee's memoir, intimates the connexion between Sheffield, Rotherham, and Leeds, and their dependance on the same preachers for aid.

Ecclesfield, which was visited in 1748, and had been abandoned for a season, was again received into the number of those places which had preaching. Mr. Thomas Abdey, a tanner, together with his wife and daughter, were members of society. He entertained the preachers, and had preaching in his house, a large old building near the entrance to the present chapel. There was preaching occasionally, too, on Ecclesfield Common. It was here that a person of the name of

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\* See his own account of it, Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 7, 8. N.B. All the Magazines quoted from 1811, are the shilling numbers, or enlarged edition. † Meth. Mag. 1808, p. 77-80. ‡ Ibid. 1780, p. 141.

Henry Moorwood brought some ale from Pashley's public-house, and offered to the preacher, while he was preaching. On the preacher refusing to drink, and shewing him the impropriety of his conduct, Moorwood said, "If you will not have it *within* you, you shall have it *upon* you," and so dashed it full at him, sprinkling those around. Mr. Thomas Cooper, now a member of Elijah West's class, stood by Moorwood at the time, and related the circumstance to the writer. This old man was born at Charton Brook, near Thorncliffe, Oct. 30, 1745, and has been a member of the Methodist Society fifty-two years. His father, John Cooper, was the first class-leader at Potter-hill, and led a class there at the time the above insult was offered; which class he continued to lead, till within a few years of his death, when, through loss of sight, and other infirmities, he was unable to look after the members, and gave it up to Matthew Bailey. The preaching on the Common was at David Hague's; and there, both Wm. Green and John Thorpe used to proclaim the gospel.

Many of the expedients employed to interrupt the heralds of the gospel in proclaiming their message to the people, were distinguished with considerable ingenuity, and might serve to amuse a leisure hour in their perusal, were they not generally connected with some diabolical design. One of these is the following, in which we find the tragic and the ludicrous united, and to which the writer of these pages could scarcely have given credit, had it not been related to him by an eyewitness, who is yet living and a member of the Methodist Society in Sheffield. No entrance as yet could be obtained into Wortley and Thurgoland, in consequence of which there was preaching at Crane Moor, at no great distance, in the house of one Samuel Brammah. Several persons, from twenty to thirty years of age, inhabitants of Wortley, contemplated serious mischief to John Thorpe. They procured a large quantity of black hair-cloth, and gave to it a form resembling that which the vulgar generally conceive the devil to possess, and which artists have foolishly given to him in prints and paintings, furnishing him with a tail, a pair of horns, a pair of wings, and cloven feet. This was so constructed

as to admit of a stout person to be concealed in the inside, who, by the assistance of a pole, could push forward as much of the hair-cloth as would open and unfold a second. A lantern was suspended in the interior of the head of this frightful figure, which, by the aid of a lighted candle, blazed through the openings intended to represent the eyes, the mouth, and the nostrils. Thus prepared, they set off to Samuel Brammah's, of Crane Moor, where there was preaching once a month, having first assured themselves that John Thorpe was there, who was the object of their sport and of their hatred. It was their intention to seize him in the act of preaching by the person concealed in the hair-cloth, to take him from thence to the top of the Clappers, a high hill, and to roll him down; which, from its situation, would in all probability either have killed or maimed him. Fortunately for the preacher, Charles Hobson, who related the circumstance, and who was then twelve years of age, was near the spot when the plan was laid, overheard the whole, and communicated it to his parents. It was imparted to others, who, though not Methodists, were the friends and hearers of John Thorpe. These way-laid the Wortley tribe with their mock-devil, furnished with large sticks. It was in the winter season; the night was dark: but the eyes of the hideous form were sufficient marks for those who were in ambush. No sooner did the persons from Wortley approach the place, than the others burst from their concealment, and laid about them most lustily; taking most ample vengeance on the gentleman beneath the hair-cloth, who found himself rather too much encumbered to make an abrupt and sudden departure. Instead of John Thorpe meeting with the fate intended, he was permitted to preach without molestation; and instead of the oppositionists from Wortley having it to report, that "The devil flew away with the preacher," and so impose, as was their design, on the credulous, they had to declare their defeat and chastisement. It was not likely to terminate here, for Mr. Cockshut, whose daughters attended preaching, and who had been repeatedly insulted by the same persons, was roused to prosecute for former offences. Through entreaties, promises, and penitence,







*Mequiner, sc.*

RESIDENCE OF W. WOODHOUSE, FULWOOD.

pardon was granted; and peace was enjoyed in the neighbourhood some time afterwards.

Persecution reared its hydra head in different other places. A preacher, through its violence, was driven out of Hathersage, in Derbyshire: but, like the opposition made to the gospel in Jerusalem, which opposition was the means of planting the truth in Samaria, and elsewhere, the same blast which prevented the seed taking root at Hathersage, scattered it in the valleys and on the hills about Hallam, where trees have been raised, and Christian societies have long enjoyed their shade. No positive information can be obtained of any particular attention having been paid to the moral culture of these parts, by the Methodists, since the days of David Taylor. A solitary person, Nathan Clayton, who was either a member of Society in Sheffield, or a hearer of preaching, lived near where the chapel now stands; and thither the persecuted preacher fled. He proposed giving the people in the neighbourhood a sermon, fixed the time, and Nathan, who offered his house, made known his intention. The novelty of the thing drew many together, and the house was more than filled. Marshall Thorpe and Wm. Woodhouse were present, together with the wife of the latter, whose prejudices had been so far conquered as to suffer her to give the sect every where spoken against one hearing. Mrs. W. was so much captivated with what she heard, that, without any previous consultation with her husband, or regard to ceremony, she stepped up to the preacher, and, in the hearing of all present, said, "The next time you visit this neighbourhood, you shall preach in our house; it is large enough, and will hold you all." William, who had experienced some compunctious visitings, was delighted with his wife's conduct. It was not long before the request was acceded to by Mr. James Oddy, who was hospitably entertained by William and his wife, and whose text was, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Some of the neighbours were considerably exasperated, and declared, if it had not been Wm. Woodhouse's dwelling, they would have pulled it down,

but as he was a good neighbour, they would forbear acts of violence. What is not a little singular, the house was a *public-house*, and preaching was in it some time before either William or his wife were converted to God. They at length found the pearl of great price; and though the public-house was continued, no drinking was allowed on the Lord's day, nor were any permitted to get intoxicated in it. The prudence, zeal, anxious solicitude for the salvation of others, and piety of this good woman, were truly exemplary. The preachers not being able to visit the places regularly, as in the present day, from the small number of hands employed, and from the various providential openings to other places, which required attention, the people were not always apprized of their coming; nor was there always time to give sufficient publicity of the service. The inventive faculty of William's wife soon supplied means of information. Having experienced the difficulty once, and got the people partially collected, she told them that, whenever the preacher came, she should suspend a *white sheet*, a very proper emblem of the purity of the gospel, its professors, and its heaven, in a conspicuous place on the brow of the hill, naming, at the same time, the hour of service. When the white flag was hoisted, every eye was directed towards it, as to a beacon on some promontory; and not more elated are the tenants and neighbours of some of our noblemen, who still retain the custom, when they see the flag streaming in the wind, from the highest turret of some venerable mansion that has witnessed feudal times, announcing a public entertainment, than were the pious people of Fulwood and Hallam, when they beheld the signal for dispensing the bread of life. They were seen, at the time appointed, ascending and descending the different hills, in different directions, or pouring down the valley, all bending their course to the spot where the standard of the Cross was about to be raised, and their souls refreshed. An interesting group, composed of Mr. Bolsover's daughters, of Whiteley Wood, were often seen on an opposite rise from William Woodhouse's, listening with apparent pleasure to the singing, and to whose ears, when the preacher was sufficiently



loud, a word was occasionally borne on the passing breeze. Mr. Bolsover himself afterwards became a hearer of the Methodists, permitted them to preach in Whiteley Wood Hall, contributed considerably towards the erection of Hallam Chapel, gave the ground, and left a hundred pounds to build a small chapel at Whiteley Wood.

Mrs. Woodhouse made rapid progress in the divine life; her career was short, but bright. She understood human nature well, and the impediments to growth in grace. One evening, after service, her husband, in the simplicity of his soul, and from the good he had received, let two or three words drop in the way of praise, relative to the sermon. She stood behind the preacher, and with a significant shake of the head, and expression of the countenance, elevating and clasping her hand at the same time, imposed silence; intimating that praise might inflate the speaker with pride, and that they were to look through the instrument to the Author of good. When she saw any stranger begin to frequent a place of worship, she earnestly interceded with God in their behalf. This was especially the case, when, after the opening of Mulberry-street Chapel, which she attended with her husband, she first saw Mr. George Story begin to hear preaching; and it is probable, though unknown to him, that he was not a little indebted to Mrs. Woodhouse, for her fervent, effectual prayers. She caught a malignant fever, when visiting the sick, and died in the full triumph of faith, in 1761. Preaching was continued in the house for several years; but it was not till 1764, that it was licensed as a place of worship, being then the 4th year of the reign of Geo. III. The licence was obtained by Wm. Woodhouse and Benjamin Kirkby, at the Rotherham Quarter Sessions; Francis Wood and Samuel Tooker, Esqs., were upon the bench. On the day that old Mr. Woodhouse's portrait was taken, the licence was handed out, which he was able to read without glasses. The writer could not resist various reflections which forced themselves upon the mind, while conning over the legal instrument. The house was licensed both as a *public-house* and a *house of prayer*, and both licences were in full authority at the same

time; the one, though contrary to the original intention of inns, and the design of the legislature, converting it into a synagogue of Satan, and the other restoring it to its primitive use in the order of Providence, for the comfort and accommodation of travellers, and authorizing its inmates to convert it into a temple for the worship of the living God. So, may every thing inimical to good order and Christian morals perish, O Lord! —perish by being restored and renovated. The house is partly occupied by George Marsden, son-in-law to William Woodhouse, and a class-leader of the Methodist Society; but is not now employed as an inn. It was not long after preaching was thus introduced into Hallam, before a class was formed, and, as previously stated, was led by Sarah Moore.

Proposals appear to have been issued this year for the purpose of soliciting subscribers for Mr. WESLEY's Notes on the New Testament, which, he informs us, he began to write in February, 1754.\* A list of the subscribers' names, as written by Wm. Green, who appears still to have been Mr. WESLEY's book-agent for this part of the country, has been preserved; and among the Sheffield subscribers, the names of John Butler, James Walker, Thomas Watkinson, Joseph Dewsnap, Edward Bennet, Robert Marsden, Sarah Savage, Edward Gregory, and Ezra Twigg, are found. As many as 108 parts, at six shillings per part, came at a time; and these were forwarded to Epworth and Grimsby, in Lincolnshire, and other places. Among the purchasers of Mr. WESLEY's works in Rotherham, were Mr. Samuel Walker, John Thorpe, Val. Radley, Wm. Green, and others. There were also a number of "effigies" sold at the same time, probably engravings of Mr. WESLEY, at sixpence each. It was not long after this, that Wm. Green had to record, "The books which I have left to dispose of are, two parts of Edward Bennet's Notes, whose subscription I have bought of him;" which is partly explained in Mr. Edward Bennet's growing attachment to Mr. Whitfield, and his final separation from the Methodists.

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\* Journals, vol. ii. p. 179.

In addition to Messrs. Lee and Hanby, the societies appear to have had the labours of Mr. Wm. Alwood, Mr. Michael Fenwick, and Mr. William Fugill. Of William Alwood, who is not even noticed in Mr. Atmore's Methodist Memorial, very little can be said. He began his itinerant labours in 1756, and departed from the work in 1764\*. If this be correct, he must have been a local preacher, when Marshall Thorpe heard him preach at Bradwell, in 1753. The most authentic account that can now be obtained of him is, that he served an apprenticeship to a butcher of the name of Crook, in the Park,—that, just at the time when he was released from his servitude, he heard David Taylor,—that he became deeply pious,—and finally went out as a travelling preacher, in which capacity he continued, till, probably, the period assigned by Mr. Myles for his departure from the work. Of Michael Fenwick, an opportunity will offer of saying a little hereafter. Wm. Fugill, who was a native of Rothwell, near Leeds, was a man of considerable ministerial abilities; and, for some years, was extensively useful, and highly acceptable to the people among whom he laboured. He fell from his steadfastness, and was excluded from the Connexion, in 1764. After another trial of him in 1767, a second separation took place: he then retired to Rothwell, where he spent the remainder of his days in poverty and disgrace, and died in 1800.

1757. On Monday, July 25, 1757, Mr. WESLEY left Epworth with great satisfaction, and about one preached at Clayworth. At the latter place, he observes, "I think none was unmoved, but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hay-stack." The publication of this may appear severe; but when it is known, that Michael was an offensive ape of Mr. WESLEY, and that he had been weak enough to complain to some of the preachers, that Mr. WESLEY never noticed him in his journals, a more effectual check could scarcely have been given to his vanity. From Clayworth he rode, in company with others, to Rotherham. When he arrived, he had neither strength nor voice left.

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\* Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 446.

However, in an hour he was able to preach to one of the largest congregations, which was ever supposed to have assembled there. On Wednesday 27th, he preached about noon at Barley Hall, and in the evening at Sheffield. After spending a short time with the Society, he lay down as soon as possible, but could not sleep before twelve o'clock; and not long together after. Yet he felt no faintness in the morning, but rose lively and well, and had his voice more clear and strong in preaching, than it had been for several days.

Thursday 28th, he received what he terms "a strange account from Edward Bennet's eldest daughter," which is as follows:—"On Tuesday, the 19th of this month, I told my husband in the morning, 'I desire you will not go into the water to-day; at least, not into the deep water, on the far side of the town. For I dreamed I saw you there out of your depth, and only your head came up just above the water.' He promised me he would not, and went to work. Soon after four in the afternoon, being at John Hanson's, his partner's house, I was on a sudden extremely sick, so that for some minutes I seemed just ready to expire. Then I was well in a moment. Just at the time, John Hanson, who was an excellent swimmer, persuaded my husband to go into the water on the far side of the town. He objected, the water was deep, and he could not swim; and being much importuned to go in, stood some time after he was undressed, and then kneeling down, prayed with an earnest and loud voice. When he arose from his knees, John, who was swimming, called him again, and treading the water, said, 'See, it is only breast high.' He stepped in, and sunk. A man who was near, cutting fern, and had observed him for some time, ran to the bank, and saw his head come up just above the water. The second or third time he rose, he clasped his hands, and cried aloud, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Immediately he sunk and rose no more. One might naturally inquire, What became of John Hanson? As soon as he saw his partner sink, he swam from him to the other side, put on his clothes, and went straight home."



“About noon,” says Mr. WESLEY, “I preached at Woodseats; in the evening at Sheffield. I do indeed *live* by preaching! How quiet is this country now, since the chief persecutors are no more seen! How many of them have been snatched away, in an hour, when they looked not for it! Some time since, a woman of Thorpe often swore she would wash her hands in the heart’s blood of the next preacher that came: but before the next preacher came, she was carried to her long home. A little before John Johnson settled at Wentworth, a stout, healthy man who lived there, told his neighbours, ‘After May-day, we shall have nothing but praying and preaching: but I will make noise enough to stop it:’ but before May-day he was silent in his grave. A servant of Lord R—— (Rockingham) was as bitter as he, and told many lies, purposely to make mischief: but before this was done, his mouth was stopped. He was drowned in one of the fish-ponds.”\*

Though some persecutors were represented to Mr. WESLEY as removed, there were others who long triumphed in Rotherham; two of whom were the ring-leaders of others, in every species of opposition to Methodism. One of them, John Robinson, had been a drummer in the army; and he was generally employed in beating his drum, in order to drown the voice of the preacher; till, unfortunately for him, Mr. Bartholomew Hunsfield, grandfather to Mr. T. Hunsfield, of Brinsworth, went up to him one day, and sent his knife through the top of it, and thus, in the face of the mob, rendered the instrument unserviceable. Mr. Hunsfield was a member of Society, and being a person of property and respectability, the mob were less violent and revengeful, than if it had been a person in indigent circumstances, who had destroyed the instrument of their mirth. A person of the name of Smith, a butcher, adopted other methods of annoyance. Being a man of great muscular strength, he would sometimes go up to the preacher, take him in his arms, and after sporting with him, then bear him away in triumph. On one occasion, he carried a preacher in this way into the

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\* Journals, vol. iii. p. 301, 302, 303.

yard belonging to the parsonage. At other periods, he exchanged sport for wanton mischief; and, with a large bucket, full of blood, and other ingredients from the slaughter-house, would have gone up to the person preaching, and have thrown it upon him, and on the serious part of his audience. The descendants of this man have learnt another lesson, and there is one of them, a grandson, Mr. Richard Smith, a local preacher in the Methodist Connexion, in the Pontefract circuit. Either these men, or their persecuting associates, tarred and feathered a horse belonging to Mr. Johnson, of Barley Hall, which one of the preachers had borrowed to carry him to Rotherham. There was seldom a time, that any of the Methodist preachers visited the town, in which they were not annoyed, in one way or other, for a succession of years.

## CHAP. VIII.

*Mr. Wesley's re-union with Mr. Whitfield—Its effects in Sheffield—Thomas Olivers—Preaching in Mulberry-street—Early trustees, leaders and private members of Society—Sheffield taken into the Epworth circuit—John Thorpe separates from the Rotherham Society and forms a party of his own—Some account of Mr. Mather—Persecution—Some account of George Wainwright—Verses by Mr. Holland—Copy of a letter from Mr. Wesley.*

1757. IN viewing the state of the Sheffield Society at this period, it will be necessary to advert to still earlier times. An union had taken place between Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield. This was effected in January, 1750, and gave Mr. WESLEY the highest satisfaction. He says, "Friday 19, in the evening, I read prayers at the chapel in West-street, and Mr. Whitfield preached a plain, affectionate discourse. Sunday 21, he read prayers, and I preached. So, by the blessing of God, one more stumbling-block is removed."\* Ever after this, Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield spoke of each other in the most affectionate terms, assisted each other in their labours, wherever they providentially met, and maintained a correspondence by letter. Desirable as such an union was, it led to partial evils—evils, however, which were afterwards overruled for good.

The good understanding opened up between the two leaders, led, in some instances, to an union of worship among the followers. Hence, in the chapel which succeeded that of 1746, both the Methodists and Calvinists worshipped; Edward Bennet at the head of Mr. Whitfield's interest, John Wilson and others, at the head of Mr. WESLEY'S. Calvinism would probably be preached in the morning, and Arminianism in the evening;

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\* Journals, vol. iii. p. 23.

thus, the minds of the people were often distracted with jarring sentiments. This was not all; but when any were awakened under the Methodist preachers, the persons belonging to Mr. Whitfield's party employed every method to gain them over to their creed. Such were the facts stated by Mr. Thomas Olivers, in 1770, in Mulberry-street chapel, in the hearing of Mr. Thos. Ellis, and the rest of his audience, when on a visit to Sheffield, from Derbyshire, where he then travelled; and but for such a statement, as he then made, the state of the Society had been wrapped up in obscurity; nor should we have known what led to a change of place. We find, from his life, that he was at Leeds, in 1757\*, from whence the preachers came to Sheffield. He further stated to his auditors, that when he saw the Methodists gained no ground, he was determined to effect a revolution in one way or other. Accordingly, he took for his text one day, "Wherefore turn yourselves, and live yet;" from whence he established the free agency of man. This gave huge offence to the Calvinist party; and having, from superior numbers, or greater property in the building, the most plausible claims, they discharged Mr. Olivers and his brethren from preaching any more among them. This was what he wanted; and the Wesleyan Methodists being driven out of doors, began to provide for themselves. They procured a building in Mulberry-street, which was converted into a place of worship. Upon this they entered; about twelve yards by ten; without a gallery; the walls, though whitewashed, unplastered; and in this state they continued in it five or six years.

Mr. Thomas Olivers was a native of Wales, and was born in Tregonan, in Montgomeryshire, in 1725. He was a proverb of wickedness prior to his conversion to God, and sometimes made even his associates in vice tremble at his oaths and blasphemies. Through his profligate course of life, he contracted a number of debts. These, when he became religious, he freely discharged, and offered interest to the persons to whom he was indebted, during the period of embarrassment. So much

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\* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 139—140.

† Ezek. xviii. 32.





MURRAY STREET PR. MURRAY HOUSE, IN ITS ALTERED FORM, 1825.



in earnest was he, for the salvation of his soul, that he was for some time almost continually upon his knees. By this means he soon grew lame in one knee, and in a short time the other failed, so that it was with difficulty he could walk at all. Mr. WESLEY sent him into Cornwall, in 1753, from which period he gave himself wholly to the Christian ministry. His natural temper was warm, which occasionally exposed him to trouble. As a preacher he was useful and acceptable. He continued to travel till about the year 1775, when he was appointed the corrector of Mr. WESLEY'S press. He wrote and published several pamphlets, which prove him to have been a man of considerable mind and reading. His discourse on Heb. ii. 3., is generally esteemed an excellent performance, and is supposed to be by many, what he asserts in the title-page, "A full Refutation of the Doctrine of Unconditional Perseverance." He also composed that admirable hymn, "The God of Abraham praise," which is a fair specimen of his poetic talent; he was also a considerable proficient in music. Had he never penned any thing but his letter to Mr. Hanby, on the death of Mrs. Hanby, in August 19, 1766\*, it alone would be sufficient to stamp high respectability on his character as a writer. In addition to considerable grasp of thought, fine discrimination, genius, and force, there are some tender bosom-touches not often to be met with. He died rather suddenly in 1799, and was interred in the Rev. J. WESLEY'S vault, in the New Chapel burying-ground, City-road, London.

The place in Mulberry-street, of which the Methodists were now in possession, had been occupied by a person of the name of Sutton, with a view of teaching a school; and for that purpose it continued some time during the week days. It is now partly (1821) in the occupancy of Mr. Damms, a member of the Methodist Society, and partly of another person in the neighbourhood; the former converting his portion into a wire-manufactory, the latter into a billiard-room. It has been raised two stories higher since it was a preaching-house; it stands about the middle of Mulberry-

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\* Meth. Mag. 1801, p. 309.

street, on the right hand going into High-street. The writer could not but sigh over one part of the building, when he recollected its former use; and with considerable curiosity the whole was examined, while old Mr. Wilkinson pointed out the different parts, where the pulpit stood; where several pious members had their seats, &c. &c. Among the original trustees were Joshua Dewsnap, Henry Glover, John Butler, Thomas Prince, in whose house there had been preaching some time in Brinceworth's Orchard, Ezra Twigg, Henry Alsop, James Walker, and John Paramore. There were others, but their names are not now to be found. The following were leaders of classes, viz. Joseph Kitchen, Henry Alsop, whose class met in Coalpit-lane, Richard Addy, William Hustler, and Thomas Grisby, the last of whom met his class in Trinity-street, in the house of Joshua Dewsnap, father of the present Mr. Dewsnap. One of the members of Society, whom it would be unpardonable not to notice, was Mr. Loy, father of the gentleman who left a legacy to forty poor people, to be paid annually by the trustees of the chapels, and to be continued as long as there shall be a chapel in Sheffield in which the Methodist doctrines are preached. After the first occupancy of Mulberry-street preaching-house, it was twice enlarged, which enlargements will be noticed in a future page.

How long the place from which the Wesleyan Methodists were expelled, was continued by Mr. Whitfield's party, is uncertain; but we find Mr. Edward Bennet heading a religious division in 1774, from the Nether Chapel. "When Mr. Harmer," says Mr. Hunter, "was chosen minister of the Nether Chapel, a small part of the society withdrew, amongst whom was Mr. Edward Bennet, a sugar-baker, who, at his own expense, erected a place for worship in Coalpit-lane."\* George Bennet, Esq., now on a mission to Otaheite, whose hand was in every good work, while in Sheffield, with whom the writer had the happiness of a personal acquaintance, and to whom Mr. Montgomery addressed some farewell lines†, is nephew to Mr. Edward Bennet,

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\* Hunter's Hallamshire, p. 171. † Evangel. Mag. for May, 1821, p. 210.



whose brother John was heir to his property. Mr. John dying in 1800, without issue, having never been married, the property devolved to Mr. George, who is employing it as a faithful steward of God.

Some time about the close of 1757, Sheffield was taken into the Epworth circuit, but still might receive a partial supply from the Leeds preachers. Similar effects began to be felt in Rotherham, to those which had been experienced in Sheffield, from the union between Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield. Mr. Whitfield met with a favourable reception from the followers of Mr. WESLEY, and not a few embraced his sentiments. John Thorpe led the way for a division in Rotherham; he was followed and supported by Mr. Samuel and Mr. Aaron Walker, who both met in Wm. Green's class, and founded the immense iron-works at Rotherham. Samuel was the father of the late Mr. Joshua Walker, who received his education in Wm. Green's school, and grandfather to the present Henry Walker, Esq., of Blythe, and of Joshua Walker, Esq., banker, London.

In looking over the papers of Mrs. Green, at the period of this division, we find her thus expressing herself:—"Satan hates to see the brethren dwell together in unity, and he found a way to sow discord, first among the preachers, then among the members. This threw a damp on my spirits, and prevented me from being so bold in the cause as I had been wont to be. Besides, I was much united to those from whom I had received good, and I found it hard to hear others speak slightly of them. Lukewarmness crept in among us, and we began, as a Society, to settle on our lees. This, I found, would not do for me, and I crept along in the way as well as I was able, till the Society was divided; when the Lord was pleased to send Mr. Mather among us, for which I shall have cause to praise Him to all eternity." Here it may be well to permit Mr. Mather to take up the subject. "I was appointed," says he in his life, "for the Epworth circuit in Lincolnshire, which then included Gainsbro', Grimsby, and Sheffield circuits, I left London, August 15th, 1757, to walk to Epworth, about 150 miles. My fellow-labourers were Thomas Hanby, Thomas Tobias, and afterwards Thomas Lee,

It pleased God to give me much of his presence in my own soul, and to let me see some fruit of my labour. This supported me under the various exercises I met with. The first of these was at Rotherham, where John Thorpe, one of our local preachers, had just separated from us. He declared open war against us, particularly opposing what he called my perfection. Yet it pleased God to raise up many witnesses of it—many that loved Him with all their hearts; several of whom are still (1780) burning and shining lights, and several removed into Abraham's bosom. Yea, it was observed, that some of his own hearers, even while he was preaching against salvation from sin, were fully convinced of the necessity of it, and indeed never rested more till they were the happy witnesses of it.\* Christian perfection was not the only ground of difference, as appears from an account of Rachel Yates, written by Mr. Pipe. Her husband, says he, "was a man of an unblemished character. He was a hearer of Mr. J. Thorpe, who altered his sentiments, and embraced the predestinarian scheme. Thomas Yates could not receive it, and after a very singular dream, which was repeated three times the same night, he left them, and united himself with our Society at Rotherham, which was not far from where he lived."†

Mr. Myles, through some mistake, states, that John Thorpe departed from us in 1764, and associates him with the *travelling* preachers‡; whereas the division took place at the present period of the history, and it is certain that he only acted in a *local* capacity. On his leaving us, he first preached in a school-room at Masbro', and then in a chapel built by Messrs. Samuel and Aaron Walker, who left the Methodist Society with him. The old chapel was pulled down some years afterwards, and the present, occupied by the Rev. James Bennett, one of the authors of "The History of the Dissenters,"—a work in which the Methodists are not very handsomely treated, stands upon its site. Previous to John Thorpe's division, there was no dissenting place of worship in Masbro'; he laid the foundation of the dis-

\* Meth. Mag. for 1780, p. 149: for a further account of the extent of the Circuit, see Meth. Mag. 1800, p. 551.

† Meth. Mag. 1799, p. 428.

‡ Chronol. Hist. p. 449.

senting interest there. Methodism, however, claims him as her child; and but for her, his religious character had probably been unknown, and his talents have lain dormant. But her spirit impressed his heart, and her peculiar genius brought his talents into action. Had it not been for her fostering care, the neighbourhood of Rotherham,—at least as far as we can perceive to the contrary,—had been deprived of the labours of John Thorpe as a Christian minister, Masbro' of its present place of worship, and the dissenters of Masbro' Academy. There have been obligations on both sides; in some instances the balance has been nearly equal, and in others there may be some discrepancy; where it has not proved equal, such as have imparted the favour have cause to rejoice in the ability and opportunity afforded them of doing good, while the others have cause of gratitude for the benefits conferred. The day has now arrived, however we may differ in opinion, when we can live and love like brothers, and before its close we may be as anxious to promote each other's welfare as our own. Some years after the division, Mr. Samuel Walker gave those publications of Mr. WESLEY's away, which he had purchased when a Methodist, chiefly to Wm. Parkin and Joseph England, two old class-leaders who were in his employ, thus taking his final leave of every thing Methodistical.

Not only were the original works of Mr. WESLEY given away, but the works edited by him, among which were the "Christian Library," some of the odd volumes of which are now in the possession of Mr. B. Wilkinson, of Sheffield, who purchased them of his brother-in-law, Benjamin Longley, one of Mr. Walker's servants, and one who left the Society with Mr. Thorpe at the division. Prejudice in this instance must have been very strong, since the "Christian Library" comprises the works of some of the most popular and pious Calvinistic divines.

Whatever may be the causes of division, the effects are often fatal to the peace of both parties for a considerable time afterwards; and what is generally the case, each party are only awake to their own perfections, and can perceive only the defects of the other. It is rare indeed that blame is not to be attached to both sides; and sorry should the writer be in this instance, any more

than in the differences between John Nelson and Mr. Ingham at a more early period, to establish the innocence of the one at the expense of the other. John Thorpe acted no doubt from principle; every other circumstance connected with his character, after his conversion, stamps him a man of God; and though greatly indebted to Methodism, he honestly and zealously endeavoured to repay it in the hard labour of several years. The Methodists ought to revere his memory. Though he drank freely of the cup of joy while he was with the body, he was not unmindful of the Hand that gave it; he did not grow up and flourish like the flower, unconscious of the sun that blesses it; he was a credit to Methodism while he professed its peculiarities; and when he gave up that profession, he did not, like many, forsake his God; he was still in the service of King Messiah, though draughted into another battalion; and he was one of those who were placed in the front of the battle, the advantages of whose victories we are at this day enjoying.

With pleasure the writer records the following anecdote, as one instance, among many, of the effects of John Thorpe's ministry. Once, when it had been announced for him to preach in a certain village, the wife of a farmer, being a pious woman, asked leave of her husband to go and hear him. The farmer, a reprobate man, roughly refused, but she, unwilling to be disappointed, renewed her intreaties from time to time, till, overcome by her importunity, he at length consented, telling her in bitter irony that she might go on one condition,—a condition by-the-bye which he could not expect her to accept, since compliance with it might be fatal to her; it was, that, as the place was at a considerable distance, she should ride thither on a certain vicious horse which he had. The good woman, though sensible of his unkind meaning, and that the permission so given was designed to operate as a prohibition, joyfully and undauntedly determined to venture, being thankful to hear the gospel on any terms. Accordingly she set out, arrived in safety, and joined the congregation in a barn. During the sermon, happening to turn her head, she was struck with inexpressible astonishment to behold her husband's face at the door, where he stood among the crowd, eagerly lis-



tening to the preacher, and in evident agitation of mind, for the tears were rolling abundantly down his hardy sun-burnt cheeks. When the pair met afterwards, at the conclusion of the service, the poor man, with the deepest contrition, acknowledged that, after his wife had left him, being alone, he could not help reflecting on the wickedness and inhumanity of having exposed her life to peril by the restive animal which she rode. He was so shocked at himself, that he quickly followed her, though at a distance, to see what might happen, and to be ready to give her succour, if she appeared in actual danger. When he saw her safely set down among the people, he also joined them from curiosity; but lo, the word of God, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, had pierced through soul and spirit; his conscience was awakened, he was convinced of sin, abhorred himself, and repented as in dust and ashes. The interview between the husband and wife under such circumstances was like death to the former—the death of all his evil life,—for from that time he became another man; and it was new life to the latter, a resurrection from the dead to her in the affections of her partner, in her future hopes concerning him, and in the happiness which thenceforward they enjoyed together, while walking in the ways of wisdom and the paths of peace.

While Mr. Mather was in the Epworth circuit, he drank deep into the Spirit of God. In answer to some questions put to him relative to “the great salvation” experienced by him, he observes, “With regard to the time and place, it was Rotherham, in the year 1757, that I enjoyed it in a far greater measure than I ever did before, or do now.”\* He then enters fully into the doctrine of sanctification; and such were Mr. WESLEY’s views of the statement, so clear, so rational, so scriptural, that he added as a postscript, “I earnestly desire, that all our preachers would seriously consider the preceding account, and strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to *go on to perfection*; yea, to expect full salvation from every sin, by mere grace, through simple faith.” Mrs. Green’s experience and testimony, in her diary, are in

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\* Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 203.

perfect accordance with Mr. Mather's statement:—"When Mr. M. came to the circuit," says she, "I was in deep mourning for my brother; I was also brought very low, through unbelief, my foolish wisdom, and evil heart; but we had many comfortable seasons together in prayer and conversation, and both experienced a degree of that perfect love, which casteth out all fear that hath torment in it,—a much greater work than that of my first espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Subscribers, a list of whose names is preserved by Wm. Green, were solicited, this year, for Mr. WESLEY's treatise on "Original Sin," and the copies were delivered the year following at 3s.9d. each.

We know but little, at this remote period, of the exertions of the first Methodists, to rescue their fellow-creatures from ignorance and from vice. Sarah Moor, who now led the class at Hallam, not unfrequently went from Sheffield to Bradwell, in Derbyshire, a distance of sixteen miles, to hold prayer-meetings. There were two old women, Isabella Furness and Margaret Howe, who encouraged her,—probably the fruit of Wm. Alwood's labours in 1753. Marshall Thorpe was the moving cause of Sarah's visits.

The travelling preachers appear to have laboured in love. Mr. Tobias, the least known in the connexion, was a native of Wales. He began to itinerate in 1750, and closed his public labours about 1767. He was naturally cheerful and active; remarkably zealous; and of undoubted piety. Mr. Myles represents him as departing from the *work* in 1767, and Mr. Atmore as departing from *life*.\*

1758. Mr. WESLEY's nearest approach to Sheffield in 1758, was Bawtry, near Doncaster; which he only took on his road to Epworth. "I came to Bawtry about six. Some from Epworth had come to meet me; but were gone half an hour before I came: so it remained only to hire horses and a guide. We set out about seven; but I soon found my guide knew no more of the way than myself. However, we got pretty well to Idle-stop, about four miles from Bawtry, where we had just

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\* Chron. Hist. p. 449; Meth. Mem. p. 430.

light to discern the river at our side, and the country covered with water. I had heard of one Richard Wright that lived thereabouts, who knew the road over the Moor perfectly well. Hearing one speak, (for we could not see him,) I called, 'Who is there?' He answered, 'Richard Wright.' I soon agreed with him, and he quickly mounted his horse and rode boldly forward. The north-east wind blew full in our faces (March): and I heard them say it was very cold; but neither my face, nor hands, nor feet were cold, till between nine and ten we came to Epworth. After travelling more than ninety miles, I was little more tired than when I rose in the morning."\*

A letter of Sarah Moor's, to Mr. Wm. Alwood, who was then in the Manchester circuit, gives us a partial insight into passing events. It is dated March 6, 1758, Sheffield. After noticing her father's illness, she observes, "Mr. Mather has preached twice to-day; and, blessed be God, we have no disturbance. I see myself so unworthy of the least mercy, that I am ready to say, Why is it, O Lord, that thou hast brought the gospel under my roof? My soul is longing for more of God. I see daily need of holy *living*, that there may be holy *dying*. Elizabeth Mason and Elizabeth Murrow are dead; and Mr. Hanby is ill of a fever, though recovering. We have had Mr. Mather ever since we solicited him to change with you. But Mrs. Mather has come." Sarah then gives an account of a Mrs. Wainwright, who had been brought to God under affliction, whose husband had violently opposed her, but was then so far reconciled as to allow her to visit Miss Moor, though not to hear preaching. She speaks, also, of Jonathan Booth having received a letter from Mr. Alwood. This letter seems to intimate, that Mr. Alwood had laboured in these parts some time previous to this, from his familiarity with the members of Society; which is further confirmed by the frequent recurrence of his name in Wm. Green's account-book; and, accordingly, noticed in 1756. It should seem too, that as soon as the members of Society had been expelled from the house occu-

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\* Journal, vol. iii. p. 320.

pied by Mr. E. Bennet's party, they were accommodated by Sarah Moor and her mother, and that the place procured in Mulberry-street was either not fully prepared to receive a congregation till after March 6, since Sarah was then rejoicing at having the *gospel brought under her roof*; or, as Mulberry-street house was employed for a school, there might be preaching in it on the Sunday, and at Sarah's on the week day: March 6th was on a Monday\*; on that day, Mr. Mather had preached two sermons: one of these was probably at five o'clock in the morning, the other at seven in the evening, periods which would admit of the free use of the school for the children through the day. Monday evening preaching appears to have been customary in our large towns, from the first, where the preacher found it practicable to stay. While he enjoyed a halt-day himself, it aided in perpetuating the devotional spirit produced on the Lord's day. Possibly this might be about the period in which the first quarter-meeting was held, as it was held in Sarah Moor's house, Fargate, and the whole of the members of Society appear now to have made it their grand resort.

Mrs. Mather, who is represented as having arrived in Sheffield, was either on a visit from Epworth, or had come from London to her husband, who had walked from thence to his circuit about eight months before; a period of separation between man and wife not at all uncommon in the early history of Methodism, and which, from the father's absence from home, rendered the erection of a public school so necessary. Mrs. Mather was the first preacher's wife who had any *allowance for board*, &c.; and such was the provision in reference to *furniture*, that she had to carry her bed from circuit to circuit.

The aid which Sheffield received, in the course of last year, from others than the Epworth preachers, appears to have been continued; for both Mr. John Hampson and Mr. John Manners have left undeniable evidence of their having spent a considerable time in these parts. While the first of these was preaching in

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\* Journal, vol. iii. p. 319.



the house of Wm. Woodhouse, of Hallam, there was some disturbance; but instead of employing carnal weapons, which some were disposed to do, he told the turbulent he would "knock them down with the Word of God." One of the principal disturbers was so much influenced in favour of the preacher, in the course of the service, that he stood up and declared that no one should again molest him.

Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, who was now devoted to God, frequently accompanied the preachers to the neighbouring places. In coming from Totley, with Mr. John Manners, where the latter had been preaching, and upon whom the enemies of the gospel had scarcely expended the whole of their malignity, they were assailed by several persons who had lain in ambush to wait their appearing. The principal object of their wrath was the preacher. One of the blows, however, dealt at him, was received by Jonathan Booth, whose breast was wounded by it, and the effects of which he is supposed to have carried to his grave. For several days, he was seriously indisposed. Mr. Manners escaped uninjured: but what he was preserved from here, he met in other places. He was born at Sledmere, near Malton, in Yorkshire, in the year 1731, and experienced the truth as it is in Jesus, in 1755. If Mr. Myles be correct, that he commenced his itinerant life in 1759\*, he must have now been a local preacher, and on a visit to the neighbourhood. He was remarkable for his zeal and usefulness; his whole Christian career was a sermon; but the hardships he endured in the faithful discharge of his apostolic office, were too much for his weak constitution, and occasioned his death in the prime of life, in 1763, in the city of York. He left this world in the full triumph of faith.

Totley, a village about five miles from Sheffield, and at which Mr. Manners and J. Booth had been, had received visits from the preachers a little prior to this. Preaching was at first out of doors, generally under a sycamore tree: but it was not long before George Wainwright, the oldest of the three patriarchs, whose

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\* Chron. Hist, p. 448.

portraits appear in the front of this work, took in the preachers and permitted them to preach in his house. He bore with patience the taunts of the rude, the reproofs of his friends, and the still heavier hand of the outrageous mob. Never could he be induced to turn the Methodists out of doors; and preaching was in the village a considerable time before a Society could be formed. Sarah Green, one of the first members, had a clod of earth thrown at the side of her face; and turning her head round, she received another: "There," said she, without being either grieved or afraid, "you have taken me on both sides." Few places, for the size, had greater disturbances in them than Totley. The people were determinately opposed to every thing in the form of religion; which reflects the greater honour on the man who opened his door for the truth. George was born, January 28, 1714, at Bamforth, about two miles from Hathersage, in Derbyshire. He there learned the trade of weaving, and then removed to Dronfield in 1739, where he lived till 1743. From thence he removed to Totley, and was married in 1744. There he spent a great part of his life; and his next remove was to Whiteley Wood, where he met in class as long as he was able to attend. While at this place, the following paragraph appeared in the *Iris* of April 25, 1805:—"We are informed that there is now living at Whiteley Wood, near this town, a man called Geo. Wainwright, in the hundredth year of his age. He is a weaver and works at his trade, is stout and hearty, and can walk faster than most young men: he is not short of breath, but (according to our correspondent) is likely to live as long again as he has done." The correspondent of the *Iris* must either have been incorrectly informed of his age, or George must have died at the great age of 116, instead of 107. On his residence at Dore, during the latter part of his life, he became infirm, and through his non-attendance, his name unfortunately was omitted in the class-paper, which should have continued to the end. At the Jubilee of George III., fifty old men were selected out of the town and neighbourhood of Sheffield, whose separate ages exceeded that of His Majesty's. To these, coats and hats were given. George Wain-

wright was one of them, and, in the language of a friend, "was king of them all" in point of age. A subscription was proposed to be entered into for the purpose of having his likeness taken, in order to be placed in the Cutlers-Hall. A full-length portrait was accordingly taken, by Schwansfelder; but the subscriptions not having been paid in, the painting remains in the possession of Mr. Mitchell, of Broad-lane. It was customary for some gentlemen, during the last years of his life, to provide a repast for himself and his descendants, on the anniversary of his birth-day, as a tribute of respect to his age and character. The following is a hymn, sung on his last annual festival, and composed for the occasion, by Mr. John Holland, author of "Sheffield Park," &c.:—

" Before the flood, five hundred years  
Protracted oft the life of man;  
Now, frail three-score and ten appears  
A very hand-breadth and a span.

" But He who gave us mortal breath,  
Ordain'd our being, health, and strength,  
Knows best when to arrest in death  
A life of brevity or length.

" Lord, still thou sparest this heir of heaven,  
In patriarch age, to dwell on earth,  
Surviving five-score years and seven,  
Departed since the pilgrim's birth.

" Thousands, born on *his* natal day,  
Who first with him beheld the sun,  
Have smiled, and wept, and pass'd away—  
Their earthly joys and sufferings done.

" Ah, none of *us* may e'er attain  
Thy servant's lengthen'd pilgrimage;  
Yet life or death, with Christ, is gain  
In youth, in manhood, or in age.

" Till death shall loose the silver cord,  
And till the golden bowl shall break,  
Still may thy ancient servant, Lord!  
Kept by thy grace, thy glory seek.

“ And we, who now surround him here,  
 Led by thy mercy, God of truth !  
 May we, with him, in heaven appear,  
 And crown'd with everlasting youth.”

One thing which tended to awe the people in Totley was, the sudden death of a young man, who, a little before his exit, had been very active as a persecutor, in pulling the preacher from his stand, and offering other acts of violence. It was perfectly unnecessary for serious characters to view it as a judgment; the wicked themselves viewed it as such, and their own comment was not without its salutary effect.

Sarah Moor, who appears to have written to Mr. WESLEY for religious counsel, received the following answer, dated London, November 22, 1758 :—

✓ “ My dear sister,

“ Praise God for what He hath already done. Let those give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed and delivered from the hand of the enemy : but you know a greater deliverance is at hand. What have you to do, but to fight your way through the world, the flesh, and the devil ? It is a good, though a painful fight. Unless you yield, you cannot but conquer. It is true, you will first conquer by little and little. For

‘ More of this life, and more we have,  
 As the old Adam dies.’

But there is also an instantaneous conquest : in a moment sin shall be no more. You are gradually dying for a long time. But you will die in a moment. O hasten to that happy time ! Pray, strive, hope for it !

“ I am, your affectionate brother,

“ J. WESLEY.”



## CHAP. IX.

*An Address to the Churchmen of Beighton—A dialogue—A letter of Mr. Lee's---Mr. Wesley preaches at Sheffield and Rotherham---A particular providence---John Olivers.*

1759. THE restless spirit of persecution, sō frequently noticed, was still in operation; and no sooner did it appear in one quarter, than it was visible in another. To shew its malignity, and to deter its advocates from their iniquitous practice, Wm. Green found it necessary to address them, a copy of which address he has left among his papers, and is thus expressed:—

“To the zealous churchmen of Beighton\*, who have of late been concerned in stoning and abusing several inoffensive people, for singing psalms and hymns, and praying. These persons were in the house of John White, who, till of late, was a very profane character, but has now turned to God, and is striving for heaven. As self-examination must be acknowledged to be the duty of every Christian, I sincerely desire that every one of you would examine yourselves, and see if you were not, in the late persecution, guided by the same spirit which influenced the breasts of those in former days, who were found fighting against God, though with a view to forward religion. And first of all, read Gen. iv. 8, where we have an account of Cain murdering his godly brother Abel. Was not yours the same spirit? Were you not moved to the work from the very same principle which led the men of Sodom to persecute righteous Lot? Or read Daniel vi. 10, &c.; and see whether you

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\* Beighton is about eight miles from Sheffield, and is in the neighbourhood of Rotherham.

are not as much, and as unreasonably, prejudiced against the Methodists (so called), as the Babylonians were against him, and were the occasion of his being cast into the den of lions; and what was his crime? He prayed three times a day. Again, were you not influenced by the same spirit which possessed the persecutors of Christ? Witness the malice of Herod, Matt. ii. 13, who sought to slay Him in his infancy. Witness others who styled Him a madman, and one that he had a devil, John, x. 20. Witness the chief priests, who encouraged the populace to take away the life of the Son of God. And did the apostles meet with better treatment? Read Heb. xi. 36—38. Some met with cruel mockings, some were stoned, some sawn asunder, some reproached; as Noah, David, and many others recorded in Scripture, both prophets and apostles. Look also into the reign of Queen Mary, that woman of blood, and you will find that numbers of men and women were burnt to death with fire and faggot, for no other crime than that of renouncing the errors of popery, and resisting sin and Satan. Let me tell you, that the same spirit actuates you: and before you proceed any further, be pleased to read Gamaliel's counsel, Acts, v. 38, 39, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." You may be certain you are not guided by the Spirit of God. Moses wished that all the Lord's people were prophets (or preachers,) Numb. xi. 29. A person came to Christ with a complaint, that one was casting out devils in his name, and informed our Lord that he had forbidden the man: but what was the reply? "Forbid him not." St. Paul tells us, that even in his day some preached Christ one way, and some another; yet, notwithstanding that, whether in pretence or in truth Christ was preached, he rejoiced therein, yea and would rejoice. I assure you, therefore, it is the most dangerous thing in the world to persecute people on account of religion. You know not but the Methodists may be right, and you wrong: and if so, Jesus says, It were better for thee that a millstone had been tied around thy neck, and thou shouldst have been cast into the midst of the sea, than that thou

'shouldst offend one of these little ones. Remember further, that dreadful passage, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." Matt. xiii. 14. It is added, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing." Recollect, too, that still more dreadful passage, Acts, xiii. 40, 41, "Beware, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Also, "They shall call upon me, and I will not answer." I could name many other passages to the same purpose, but I would not be tedious. If you think I have not fitly applied these Scriptures to your condition and proceedings, please either to write or speak to me; and you shall have my further opinion. From your's, &c.

"WM. GREEN."

What effect this scriptural address produced, is not recorded; and small are the hopes that can be entertained of any thing permanently good. It is the civil authority alone that can control the actions of a persecutor; and only the grace of God that can root the spirit of persecution out of his heart.

Among the same papers, and written by the same hand, was found the following dialogue between a Churchman and a Methodist. It is not improbable, that it took place between Wm. Green himself and one of his neighbours, and was afterwards committed by him to paper. With others, it furnishes a further specimen of the opinions of the times, and the mode of defence adopted.

"*Churchman.* Pray, neighbour, is something amiss; whither are you going this wet night in such haste?"

"*Methodist.* I am going to hear preaching; shall I have the pleasure of your company?"

"*Ch.* No. I assure you, I have not gotten such itching ears, as to lead me to follow such run-a-gate fellows: and I am really surprised at you, above all people; that you are so deluded, and that, in this age,

you should leave the Church, and have your religion to seek now. I really pity, and am much grieved for you.

[*Off at a side from the rain.*]

“*Meth.* I am obliged to you for your respects, but much more for the opportunity of a little friendly conversation; for some will rail behind back, and be as smooth as oil to one’s face: therefore, it is honest in you to speak your mind freely, especially in a matter of such great importance. I was once as great a bigot, as full of prejudice, possessed as itching ears, and was as zealous for my Church and my religion, as you can possibly be; and it grieved me to think that government should suffer so many upstart religions, believing them, as I did, to be false. The professors, I thought, had a different look to other people; and, in short, I scarcely had charity for any except our own church party.

“*Ch.* And why do you leave the Church now? What can you learn more from such illiterate fellows, than you are taught at Church? Are not our ministers more able to instruct than a set of cobblers and tailors? Very few of them know any thing of learning, and some of them can scarcely spell their own name, or read a chapter in the Bible. They are only strolling about for an idle life, and to pick people’s pockets. Had I only my will of them, I know what I should do to them; and I advise you to follow them no longer.

“*Meth.* Out of the abundance of your heart, I have no doubt, your mouth speaks. Learning, I confess, is useful in its place; nevertheless, in a *gospel minister*, there is something still more necessary. Do ministers, I would ask, of the greatest learning, convert the vilest sinners? How many, even in this parish, who have been wicked and profligate, have been reformed and changed by hearing those whom you call learned men?

“*Ch.* We must hope the best; it is not for such as you to be judges.

“*Meth.* Pray, let me ask you one serious question or two?

“*Ch.* Aye, twenty if you please.

“*Meth.* Well, what have *you* profited by your religion and your learned divines, for which and for whom you are so zealous? I see you are overcome with the



same evil tempers, and are subject to the same wicked practices as you were several years ago. Now, I must tell you sincerely, that you must either change your religion, as you call it, or God must make a new Bible; for 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

"*Ch.* Change my religion! No, no, that I never will.

"*Meth.* Pray, what is your religion?

"*Ch.* The Church of England is my religion; and I will never forsake it so long as I live.

"*Meth.* What do you mean by the Church? for the Church fell upon Paul's neck, and kissed him. Do you mean the building, the doctrine of the Church, or the people?

"*Ch.* What, are you to be my pope? Indeed you are very impertinent, but if you would needs know, I mean the doctrine.

"*Meth.* You surely are under mistake; you no more believe the doctrine of the Church of England, than I believe the doctrine of the Church of Rome.

"*Ch.* The Methodists will not swear, but they will lie, and this is one of *your's*; disprove it if you can.

"*Meth.* Very good, I will proceed. You believe, I suppose, that, at your baptism, you were taken into the pale of the Church, when it was specified before the congregation, that you were to fight under Christ's banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil? In your Catechism you promised to forsake the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of the present evil world, the lusts of the flesh, to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life. Now, have you fulfilled your promise? Further, I ask, is sin a work of God or of the devil? Does God make you swear, lie, get drunk, fall into passion, and the like? Is this the practice of a churchman, or of the servants of God? Certainly not. Read the Scriptures: 'His servants ye are to whom ye obey,' and 'He that committeth sin is of the devil.' And are not you overcome with sin day after day? If so, you are no member of the Church, but a servant of Satan,

“ *Ch.* You are very provoking. Pray, do you live without sin?

“ *Meth.* That is not the point upon which we are at present. Do you believe it possible to renounce and overcome these works of the devil?

“ *Ch.* If I do sometimes swear, or get too much liquor, I do no one any harm, and I pray for forgiveness.

“ *Meth.* Again; do you renounce the vanities of this wicked world? Do you not frequent horse-races, assemblies, plays, balls; and are not your children also brought up in the same practices, entering them to a dancing-school from the age of ten or fifteen, and all under colour of teaching them behaviour, how to come into a room, &c.? Is this the faith and practice of a churchman?

“ *Ch.* And what harm is there in innocent diversions? Cannot I go to the places named by you without committing sin? The Scripture says, ‘Be not righteous overmuch,’ and ‘There is a time for all things.’ I tell you, I like none of your preaching; if people were to take heed to you, they would have no pleasure in their life.

“ *Meth.* This is still wide of the point. So far this is the doctrine of our Church, and the faith and practice of every true Christian. And when you were asked in the next question, Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do what was promised for thee? Your answer was, Yes, verily, and by God’s help so I will, and I heartily thank God for this salvation through Christ. If you will neither believe nor practise this part of your profession, but will consider the Scriptures quoted by you, as giving countenance to you, it is, alas! only a proof that you are still in a state of ignorance: for those texts are only adopted as the language of infidels, as every wise divine knows; otherwise, there is a time when God permits such things to be done. But you only wrest the Scriptures to your own destruction; for God’s Spirit would never indite such things, and immediately contradict them, both before and after, by telling us, that all is vanity, that the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but that the heart of fools is

in the house of mirth. We are exhorted, also, to set our affections on things above, and not on things upon earth, not to be conformed to the world, and to strive to enter in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. There are many things in your articles too, which you do not really credit, though you often say, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Catholic Church, the communion of saints, and the forgiveness of sins.' You either know not what they mean, or flatly deny them.

"*Ch.* I tell you again, if you will not swear, you do something worse: and I insist that you prove before my neighbour, that I flatly deny the articles of the Church.

"*Meth.* Indeed, I fear you cannot bear it; I had therefore much better be going.

"*Ch.* But I insist upon it, otherwise I shall cane you. I will not be thus bullied by such an impertinent fellow.

"*Meth.* Well then, let me desire you to be calm, keep down your passion, and preserve your patience. I shall begin with that article, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' Do you believe in the Holy Ghost, that the Holy Spirit is given to Christians in our day? And do you give credit to the other article, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins?'

"*Ch.* When we die, we hope our sins will be forgiven, but not before; and I think it presumption in any one to think otherwise.

"*Meth.* Take notice the next Lord's day, after you have repeated the Confession, and you will find that the minister is enjoined in the rubric to stand and repeat the absolution, 'God pardoneth and absolveth all (attend to that word) that truly repent and unfeignedly believe.' Now, as you are a scholar, you must know that these words are in the *present tense*: also in the prayer before the Thanksgiving, 'Though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us.'"

The above is the whole of the dialogue that has been preserved, and there is sufficient of it to shew, that

the writer was as well versed in the Articles, &c. of the Established Church, as the address proves him to have been well acquainted with his Bible. The opposition which the early Methodists experienced from Churchmen, so called, was what might be naturally expected. Mr. WESLEY was a clergyman; he professed an attachment to the Church of England; he laboured to inspire a reverence to her religious rites among his followers; those who were awakened under the ministry of the Methodist preachers were such as had been in some way connected with the Establishment, either as having been baptized within her walls, or as occasional attendants on her ordinances; and after their conversion to God, they still professed their belief in her doctrines, and maintained that they were, in a correctly religious sense, a greater credit to the Church, and more faithful members of her, than they had previously been. Others, in the same state in which they once were, ignorant of the doctrines of the very Establishment of which they professed themselves members, received a standing reproof from the zeal of those with whom they were wont to associate, and were exasperated to find them more quick-sighted than usual. The house was divided against itself. Not so with the dissenters: with them, generally speaking, there had been no previously professed union, either real or nominal: and hence, the opposition from that quarter was less powerful. In the latter case, it seldom amounted to more than a war of words; in the former, carnal weapons were often employed.

In Sheffield, there seemed to be a short respite from violent persecution, and the work of God was in a state of prosperity. Mr. Thomas Lee, who had been stationed in these parts after his removal from Newcastle in 1757\*, writes thus to Miss Sarah Moore:—

*“ Ancoats, June 7, 1759.*

*“ My dear sister,*

*“ Whom I love in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ! Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I*

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\* Wesley's Journals, vol. iii. p. 209.



received a few lines a good while ago, but there was no account when or where they were written; but I concluded, when I had thought a little, they might come from you. I hope you are still going on in the good old way. I hope you are thanking the Lord for what He has already done, and are pressing on for greater degrees of grace than you have already received. Be not unmindful of mercies received; for our unthankfulness is one reason why we receive so few blessings from the Lord. We always have need of prayer; if we are cold and backward, we have need of it for life and activity. If we are alive and comfortable, we still require it that we may continue so, and increase therein. If we are tossed and tempted, it is no less needful then, that we may stand and come off victorious. And should even our hearts be full of God, still we must pray, that they may be enlarged, and contain more of God in them. By these means, we may always be growing while we are alive in this world; and without this prayer, and this praise, or both, we shall grow very little in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord.

“When I was with you last summer, I preached as well as I could, but could not please part of the Society. Yet I am not discouraged. If I come again, will they hear me, think you? I am glad to find, or hear, that the Lord’s work prospers among you in your New Room. If God favours me with an opportunity, I have some thoughts of seeing you again in Sheffield: if not, I shall be glad in hearing of you at any time. How does the tailor’s wife go on now? I think they call her Alice Brammah. Has she got her zeal more tempered with grace than formerly? Has she obtained a clean heart? If so, she will be milder than when I was with you. Present my love to all; to your mother; to Jonathan and Betty Booth; to Sally Rider and her husband; and to others, as if named. I am your loving, though unworthy brother,

THOMAS LEE.”

“P. S. If you cannot find an opportunity of sending me a letter before Conference, please to forward a few lines to Leeds by the preacher.” The letter was directed “To Miss Sally Moore, at the Old Preaching-room, in Sheffield.”

The correspondence of this good man was always spiritual and instructive; and it was not uncommon at this, and still more subsequent periods, to read the letters of the preachers to the members of Society, in which there were no personal remarks.

A season of joy was now fast approaching, when the members exulted in the expectation of again beholding the face of the father of the great Methodist family. His appearance was always as welcome as the return of spring.

Though a gloom was frequently thrown over the little Societies, in consequence of the hostility manifested by wicked men, Mr. WESLEY'S visits, however transient, were like glimpses of sun-shine between days of heaviness, and revived those who were ready to faint. In August, "Thursday 2," says he, "I rode to Sheffield, and preached at one to a large and quiet congregation. I was afterwards desired to visit Mr. Dodge, curate of the New Church. I found him on the brink of eternity, rejoicing in God his Saviour. Thence I went to Rotherham, and talked with five men and six women, (as I had done with many others before in various places,) who believe they are saved from sin. And this fact I believe, that they 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.' I believe they feel nothing but love now. What they will do, I leave to God."\*

The dying curate whom Mr. WESLEY speaks of as visiting, is the same blessed man whom the first Methodists were accustomed to go from Sheffield to Ecclesal to hear: and one of the "six women" was, in all probability, Mrs. Green. In a letter of Mrs. Sarah Oddie's, Barton Forge, she observes, "I knew not any thing that hindered my deliverance from all sin, unless it were hurrying business in which I was engaged, which took up so much of my time and thought. But being about this time (1759) with Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, while she was more than commonly hurried with business I was convinced, that as she rejoiced evermore, so might I, in any outward state whatever. And the beauty of

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\* Journals, vol. iii. p. 401.

holiness which I saw in her, made me long for it more than ever."\* The influence which Mrs. Green's example had on all who were in habits of intimacy with her, whether domestics or others, was of a truly hallowing nature. The following anecdote respecting a female servant who lived with her several years, and who had received much good while in her service, will help to illustrate a gracious Providence.

The servant referred to, H. M., entered into the marriage state, and became the mother of three children. Being well instructed, and yielding to the grace given, she maintained her piety; but alas! through the negligence of a bad husband, she was obliged to have poverty for her constant companion. On one occasion, a single peck of potatoes, without any thing else, except water, was all the sustenance which she and her three children had for one whole week; of which scanty allowance the husband himself was generally a partaker. Pressed with hunger, and affected with the sight and entreaties of her children, she at length began to remonstrate with the inhuman father, on the impropriety of his conduct, in suffering his family to starve through his indolence. At this, the choler of his ferocious soul began to rise, and burst forth in looks and words, which at once threatened the lives of the mother and children. Driven before the storm of his fury, with one child in her arm, another by the hand, and the third, about five years of age, holding the skirt of her gown, they fled from before his face. While the mother was flying, not knowing whither, the last-mentioned child, in a plaintive tone, asked, "Mammy, where are you going?" Distressed with grief, the mother replied, "My dear, I cannot tell; the Lord direct us." With intreaty, the lovely little creature enjoined, "Do, mammy, turn again." With feelings convulsed, the mother answered, "I dare not!" Immediately, this little girl, as if taking an equal share in the mother's sorrow, ran before, fell down on her knees, and with hands and eyes lifted toward heaven, with moving fervour exclaimed, "O Lord, do tell my mammy where to get a little bread." No

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\* Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 450.

sooner had she uttered these words, than instantly she rose from her knees, and, with a pathos not to be resisted, cried, "Do, my mammy: do, my mammy, turn again, turn again: God will provide us bread!" Struck with the unusual conduct of the child, she yielded to its intreaty, and returned to her own house. The cruel father was gone. Fixed in a pensive and thoughtful posture, with her youngest child at the breast, a sailor came to the door and implored an alms. "Poor man," said the starving mother, "your case is sad, but mine is worse: here are three children, two of them are crying for bread, I have not a morsel, nor do I know where to get one." At such a sight, the humanized heart of the sailor began to melt. "Poor woman," said honest Jack, "*your's* is a bad case;" on which, he immediately administered to her necessities, sharing with the fainting mother and her starving offspring, the successes of the day, and leaving her to adore that Providence which had employed the simplicity of her little daughter to guide her into the way of being a partaker of the bounty of others with himself. An overflowing heart had thrown the grateful mother at the feet of His throne, who fed Elijah by the ravens, even before she tasted of the poor sailor's benevolence.\* H. M. lived at a distance from Mrs. Green, when involved in such distressing circumstances; otherwise, she would have tasted of her bounty.

At the Conference, which was held at Leeds about six days after Mr. WESLEY left Sheffield†, John Olivers was stationed here. He remarks, in a letter to Mr. W., "In the year 1759, I received a letter from you, Sir, wherein you told me I was accepted on trial, as a travelling preacher, and was appointed to labour in the Sheffield circuit. I knew not what to do. I thought, 'My abilities are by no means sufficient; and if I attempt it, I shall only expose myself, and bring a discredit upon the Gospel.' But I thought, on the other hand, 'If I do not go, I shall grieve Mr. WESLEY, and fail in my duty.' After much reasoning, I came to this conclusion, I will go and make a trial; if the Lord owns

\* Meth. Mag. 1808, p 505.

† Journals, vol. iii. p. 404.



me, and the people receive me, so long as this is the case, I will stay with them: if they do not receive me, or if I see no fruit of my labour, I will return to my business. Having prepared all things, I set out with much fear, hardly expecting to stay three months in the circuit. I thought certainly they will despise my youth (twenty-seven): but it was far otherwise. They bore with all my weaknesses, and I was kindly received and tenderly treated on every side. I was particularly indebted to two faithful friends, Mrs. G. (Green), of Rotherham, and E. B. (Booth), of Woodseats. They were nursing mothers to me on all occasions. Whenever my mind was burthened, I imparted to them all my trials, and they lifted up my hands. The circuit being long, the preachers seldom saw each other but on the quarter-day. But the people loved us, and we loved one another; so that I got the year through much better than I expected. And I did not run in vain: I did see a little fruit of my labour. But I was not satisfied with this: I wanted all the people to be converted to God. And fearing I took up the place of some more useful preacher than I was, or ever should be, at the close of the year I wrote to you, Sir, desiring I might go home." When Mr. Olivers was on a visit to a part of the Haworth circuit, where he was greatly encouraged by Mr. Grimshaw, he received the following laconic note from Mr. WESLEY:—"You have set your hand to the gospel-plough: therefore never look back."\*

One of the first places at which he exercised his ministry, and at which he was rendered useful was, Chapel-en-le-frith, in Derbyshire. Mr. John Allen, who afterwards became an itinerant preacher, had heard Mr. O. preach at Manchester, and requested his father to permit him to come to his house, and preach his mother's funeral sermon. His father consented, and the result was, that Mr. O. went to Chapel-en-le-frith, and preached with good effect to a large congregation. Mr. Allen joined the Society in September. At Chinley there appears to have been regular preaching at this time †. Another opportunity will be afforded for entering a little more into Mr. O.'s personal history.

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\* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 424.

† Ibid. for 1812, p. 4, 5.

## CHAP. X.

*Letters from Mr. Hampson and Mr. Lee—Revival of the work of God—Harthill—George Story joins the Methodist Society—Mr. Gibbs becomes the object of violent persecution—Mr. Oddie—Mr. Wild—Mrs. Holy—Jeremiah Cocker—A letter from Mr. Mather.*

1759. JOHN OLIVERS, who was now upon the circuit, expressed himself agreeable with his colleagues, who appear to have been Mr. Fugill and Mr. Gibbs, and occasionally Mr. Oddie, the two last of whom are noticed by Wm. Green. He himself was probably one of the successors of Mr. John Hampson, senior. That Mr. H. had laboured in these parts some time prior to this, has been already noticed; and from him the following letter was received by Miss Sarah Moore:—

*“ London, Oct. 1, 1759.*

*“ Dear Sister,*

*“ I should have written to you sooner, and also to other friends, on your side of the country, had I not been altogether uncertain relative to my continuance here. Mr. WESLEY has been about a month at Bristol. When he went, he gave me strict orders to remain in London, to inspect affairs till his return, which was fixed for a week hence. The other day I was informed he had set off for Cornwall; if so, I shall not get to you so soon as I expected.*

*“ God has been very gracious to my soul since I came here. Our congregations are very large; they are greatly increased since the Conference. I am much*

blessed in the company, and with the conversation of some of our friends, who profess to be partakers of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. O Sally, pray till you attain what you pursue; even the mark of the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

“ ‘When you find the passage free,  
Faithful souls, remember me,’

Who am the least of the followers of the bleeding Lamb,  
but your servant for Christ's sake,

“ JOHN HAMPSON.”

It should seem from this letter, that Mr. Hampson had been appointed to travel here at the Conference, but was prevented from coming; nor is it certain that he came till the Conference after; and there is some evidence of his having travelled here the year succeeding. The preachers that laboured on the circuit were owned of God; and the tidings, as in the present day, were soon sounded abroad. The following is the copy of a letter to the same person to whom the above was addressed, containing some excellent apostolic advice:—

“ My dear Sister,

1759.

“ I received your letter, and am glad to hear that the Lord is still prospering his work among you; and I hope he will continue, and carry on the same good work both in town and country. I doubt not but Satan will work also, and will do all that lies in his power to prevent it; but this may be some comfort to us; Satan is a conquered enemy; the Lord has him in chains, and shall finally conquer, if they continue fighting in the Lord's cause. While the preachers continue preaching and living the same pure gospel, and the people experience Christ and live as such in all holiness, meekness, long-suffering, and in all tenderness and forbearance one of another, Satan can do little to hurt the cause of God. Tell them all to beware of a hasty unsanctified zeal in religion; for this has often injured the cause they intended to defend and do honour to. Tell them also to beware of whispering, of chit chat, of a talking,

backbiting spirit: this (wherever it is found) is the very plague of society; and every God-fearing person should mark such, and be careful to avoid their company, as they would avoid the company of Satan, unless it be to speak plain to them. I advise you all to be quick to hear, and slow to speak of the concerns of others. Be sure to learn, and never forget that old maxim, ‘Of the dead and the absent speak no evil.’ Let every thing contrary to love be finally forgotten, and buried in oblivion. Let love be great, and without dissimulation. I have long ago given over measuring people’s real religion by the profession they make of great attainments, and rather look to see, whether they speak calmly, respectfully, and tenderly of all, whether they are patient under all crosses, whether they love all that love Jesus. It is of no importance whether they think *just* as I do, provided they, in lowliness and humility, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; for I must believe that a meek heart will produce a meek life; a loving heart will produce a life of the same kind. We are not to expect a humble heart and a haughty look to be joined together. By our fruits we shall be known in the eyes of all judicious persons. Let you and me, and all who profess to follow Jesus, pray, that we may be enabled to learn of Him who was meek and lowly, and then shall we find rest to our souls. As far as I enjoy the same mind which Christ had, so far I am right, and no further. O let us pray for this mind always, and in all things. I and my wife join in love to your mother. I am, your’s, &c. in the dear Jesus,

“THOMAS LEE.”

Instead of directing this letter to the “Old Preaching Room” as before, which was now waning in the mind, it was addressed “To Miss Sarah Moore, schoolmistress, at Mr. John Rider’s, Fargate, Sheffield, Yorkshire.” There is no doubt a reference to the unpleasant feeling excited at the separation of the Society from Mr. Whitfield’s followers, as it respected their worshipping under the same roof, and which continued to live some time after the occupation of the room in Mulberry-street, where Mr. Lee exhorts the members to bury the



past "in oblivion." John Rider, to whose care the letter was directed, entertained the preachers at his house; and this was the occasion of several letters being committed to his care, such persons being generally known in the town and connexion.

1760. This was a memorable year for Methodism. It pleased the Divine Being to own, in an especial manner, the ministry of his word, throughout the connexion; and the same extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit continued in the principal Societies for the space of three years.\* Adverting to this visitation of Divine mercy, Mr. WESLEY remarks, "I inquired into the state of the Societies in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. I find the Word of God increases on every side."† Not only were the larger Societies quickened, but obscure villages. "Just at this time," says Mr. Geo. Story, "a work of grace broke out in the village (Harthill) where I was born, through the labours of a person remarkably zealous for God. My mother, in particular, was deeply convinced of the truth, which she soon experienced, and retained the life and power thereof to her dying hour. She was much concerned for me, hoping, if I could be brought among religious people, I should, likewise, soon be convinced. She, therefore, by an acquaintance, intreated me to converse with the Methodists. I answered, 'If my mother desires it, I will visit them with all my heart.' The first time I entered a Methodist's house, they went to prayer with me, and for me, a considerable time. I looked upon them as well-meaning, ignorant people, and thought no more about the matter. In a few days they desired I would come and see them again. Considering it was my mother's request, I went without hesitation. I found four or five persons in the house, with whom I disputed about religion for some hours, till I had fairly wearied them." They brought their arguments from Scripture, to which he opposed reason. When he was about to withdraw, a female tried him on the ground of *experience*, and asked him whether he was *happy*? He shrunk from this test; conscience said *no*; and conviction fastened upon him;

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\* Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 37.

† Journals, vol. iii. p. 54.

which he never afterwards lost. As a proof of the genuineness of the impressions, he threw all his useless books into the fire, like those who brought their magical books to the feet of the Apostles.

George Story now resided in Sheffield, and was about twenty-two years of age. The members of Society laid close siege to him, not only with a view to be of service to him, but from a persuasion that he himself, once converted to God, would strengthen the brethren, and thus prove an acquisition to the body. He was not easily to be won. While he looked upon them as "well-meaning, ignorant people," he beheld with complacency his own superior attainments. He had perfected himself in geometry and trigonometry; Macauley's short-hand; geography and astronomy, together with botany, anatomy, phisic, and several branches of natural philosophy. He could recollect having read over 300 volumes, some of which were large folios, before he attained the sixteenth year of his age. At the age of eighteen, he had the management of a printing-office; had a weekly newspaper to publish, all the paragraphs to select from the public prints, the advertisements to prepare, the press to correct, and the journeymen and apprentices to superintend. This, though laborious, was food for his vanity. The good impressions of which he was the subject in his boyhood, had long been effaced from his heart. To attack him was like assailing a strongly fortified garrison, where the besieged, even when a breach is made, throng to the pass, and dispute it hand to hand, and man to man. The Methodists, however, continued to press upon him with blow on blow, alternately employing prayer, scripture, and experience; the last of which, he no sooner felt, than he stooped and tottered like an oak under the steel of the woodman. His gay appearance had been such as to attract attention; and, according to the statement of old Mr. Woodhouse, many were the prayers which were offered up for him, both in public and private.

Through the ministry of Mr. Fugill, further light was imparted; and Mr. Story says, while he was preaching, he "saw the way of justification and full sanctification so clearly, that he could trace the path as if it

had been a road described in a map." Under the prayer of Wm. Brammah, he felt, after groaning sometime beneath a weight of hardness of heart and guilt, the softening power of Divine grace. He was exhorted to believe; and "on close examination," he observes, "I found that I did believe every truth in the Bible; yet this did not bring a sense of justification. And I durst not think that God was reconciled to me, when I was conscious of the contrary. But the Lord soon brought me out of this dilemma, by shewing me, that to forgive was his prerogative; and to believe was my duty. This believing *for* salvation, I found was a distinct thing from believing I *was* saved; I found it implied the lifting up of the heart to the Lord, in fervent prayer, looking to Him with a steady eye and aim; without evil reasonings or vain wanderings; cleaving to Him with all my strength; casting my soul upon his mercy, and depending upon his promises." He further remarks, "Once I lost the peace of God, by attending to a discourse which set justification exceeding high, confounding it with full sanctification. Viewing myself in this false glass, and not finding I had all the marks which the preacher said belonged to one born of God, I fell into the snare of satan; gave up my shield, and suffered myself to be persuaded that all I had experienced of the goodness of God, was a mere delusion. For some hours I was in deep distress, and I saw no way to escape but by returning to the Lord in faith, who then discovered and broke the snare."\* The account from which these extracts are taken, and of which further use will be made, was written by himself, and is replete with good sense and discrimination. He seldom speaks in general terms, but enters minutely into the operations of his own mind and the workings of the Spirit of God. Every step he took in religion was strongly contested by the enemy of souls.

In the same proportion that the work of God extended, means were employed by the emissaries of satan to counteract its effects, and injure its most active agents. Mr. Gibbs, who appears to have been a son of thunder,

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\* Meth. Mag. 1782, pp. 19, 70, 72, 74, 76, 77.

and under whose "alarming discourses" powerful effects were often produced, was one of the principal objects of their malevolence. The mob frequently collected before the door of the preaching-house in Mulberry-street, On one occasion, they were furnished with a bullock's hide by a butcher, in which they wrapped Mr. Gibbs on his retiring from Divine worship, and in which they rolled him down one of the principal streets. He lost his hat and wig, and had his other apparel torn, as well as his person seriously injured. Some of the friends interfered, but it only added oil to the flames: the present Mr. Dewsnap, of Broom-grove, who was then a boy, and a spectator of the whole, saw his father insulted, his wig torn in halves and thrown among the crowd. When either the fury of the mob had exhausted itself, or Mr. Gibbs had otherwise escaped their grasp, application was made to the magistrates, and several of the ring-leaders were taken into custody: but, through false witnesses, and no great partiality to Methodism on the part of some in civil power, the persecuted preacher was unable to obtain proper redress. This gave the rioters additional licence to proceed with their violence; and no sooner did Mr. Gibbs leave the magistrates, and appear in the street, than they began again to assail him, when he narrowly escaped with his life. His next application was to a magistrate in the country, less hostile to Methodism; and he would have made the persecutors feel the full weight of the law, had not some of the principal members of Society advised the preacher to stay further proceedings. Of Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Atmore is silent in his Memorial; and Mr. Myles, through some mistake, has fixed the commencement of his itinerancy in 1760, whereas we find him labouring in the neighbourhood of Dewsbury, apparently as a travelling preacher, in 1758.\* He departed from the work, in 1766.†

Mr. James Oddie, who had formerly travelled in the Sheffield circuit, was now in Leeds, and not unfrequently visited the neighbouring places. In a letter to Mr. WESLEY, he says, "I took twenty-eight persons

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\* Meth. Mag. 1810, p. 89.]

† Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 447.



into Society at two new places, Maplewell and Kasper, situate between Wakefield and Sheffield. We have also preached at Barnsley, where they are very angry, cast rotten eggs at us, and give us heavy curses. But I think the Lord will conquer them.”\* This is the earliest notice to be met with of Barnsley; and which was a greater conquest to achieve than Mr. Oddie anticipated. He remarks, in the same letter, “James Wild has left the round very abruptly, and is gone to Sheffield, intending to keep shop there. No reasonable offence was *given* to occasion so sudden a departure. He has *taken* offence at me. Some time since, we dined together at Mr. Ikin’s. After dinner, he declared, there was no freedom from sin before death. I gave my reasons in as few and mild words as I could, why I thought it might be. This he took as a great offence. I have written to him since, and told him *from my heart*, though I intended no offence, nor thought I had given any, yet I would lay my hands under his feet, if it would do him any good. The Lord knoweth, I would rather suffer any thing, than designedly offend or needlessly grieve any creature in the world. I cannot think of it without tears flowing from my eyes.”†

Mr. Wild, instead of commencing shopkeeper, as Mr. Oddie supposed, began to teach a school, and occupied, after Sutton had left it, Mulberry-street Chapel, a place every way suited for such a purpose, as there was then no gallery in it; and which ablocation of the premises assisted the funds of the Society. Sarah Bingham, of Woodseats, daughter of Elizabeth Booth, with whom the writer has conversed on the subject, was taught in his school. He entered upon the itinerant life, according to Mr. Myles‡, in 1747. Without supposing Sheffield to have been his native place, and thus occasioning his residence in it, he must have formed some acquaintance with the friends, from having preached here in 1757. William Green states in his account-book for that period, “I paid to Mr. Wild, by order of Mr. Wesley, £3 3s. 0d., and was to receive it again out of the book money, which I at first did receive from

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\* Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 336.

† Ibid.

‡ Chron. Hist. p. 449.

Epworth, by S. Bram., which was William Shents, and sent to me by Jonas." We might be led to infer from hence, that Mr. WESLEY was accustomed to relieve the preachers that were in need, out of the profits of his own publications. Mr. Wild, after teaching school some time, died suddenly of apoplexy.

Mr. Oddie, who complained of Mr. Wild leaving the work of the ministry, left others to deplore similar conduct in himself. He was, however, at this time, in a Christian frame of mind: "The Lord Jesus," says he, in the above letter, "is the desire of my heart, and the object of my affections at all times. He many times carries my spirit, all my powers and affections, up into himself without any sensible effort of my own, and fixeth them in God, their proper centre. Sometimes I find a silent stillness, the region of the soul inconceivably calm, and all attention to an in-dwelling and in-speaking God; then I could keep always at the feet of Christ, and weep my life away. No one knows how mean and insignificant I then see myself." Mr. Oddie entered upon the itinerant life in 1746, and was for many years "a burning and a shining light." His natural disposition, which was covetousness, at length overcame him, and he settled in trade at Yarm, in this country, in 1771. He afterwards married, for his second wife, the widow of that excellent man, Mr. Colbeck, of Keighly. This union proved eventually an unhappy one, and a separation took place about the year 1785. He still, however, resided at Keighly, but after that circumstance had no connection with the Methodists. He sunk into great obscurity; and a little before his death united himself to Mr. Atley, at Dewsbury, where he preached a short time, and, it is hoped, finished his course in peace.\* There are two sermons in the Methodist Magazine, for 1799, which were previously published by him, in connection with other pieces, in a separate volume, and which do credit both to his head and heart.

About this time, Mrs. Holy, the mother of Thomas Holy, Esq. joined the Methodist Society in Sheffield. She had, till then, been accustomed to attend the minis-

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\* Atmore's Meth. Mem. p. 300.

try of the Calvinists, though she was no stranger to Methodism. Mr. John Wilson, uncle of Mr. Wilson of Sharrow-moor, was her own brother; he was connected with the Methodists, and built, as has been already noticed, the preaching-house in 1746. Her half sister too, Mrs. Ludlam, was also one of the first members of Society, whose daughter, the widow of the late James Vickers, is still living, and was then exemplary for her piety. From these ancient stems there are yet shoots flourishing in the vineyard of the Lord. On old Mrs. Ludlam's side of the house, there are three great-grandchildren who hold offices in the Methodist Society, one a class-leader, a second a local preacher, and the third a travelling preacher. Of Mrs. Vickers, much might be said. Though she had several advantageous offers of marriage, she declined them all during the life of her mother. She honoured God in her youth, and connected with *that*, the honour of her parents; in consequence of which, she has realized the blessing of God: her days have been long in the land; and chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. Holy, a kind Providence has followed her hitherto.

Not only were persons of respectability brought to an experimental acquaintance with the truth of God in this revival, but the poorest of the poor; among the last of whom was a young man of the name of Jeremiah Cocker. He had a remarkable gift in prayer; and one evening, at a prayer meeting in a private dwelling, before he was generally known in the Society, he broke out in earnest addresses at the throne of grace. His voice was strange, and being unsolicited, some of the friends were curious to know who the suppliant was, when turning round they saw a young person kneeled behind the door, half covered with rags, and like the Publican, "afar off." A subscription was immediately entered upon, and he soon appeared in other attire. His usefulness, as well as his otherwise chequered history, will appear in the course of the work.

Feb. 10th of this year, Mr. Mather wrote to Miss Sarah Moor's mother, a woman who indulged occasionally in sharpness of spirit. To such a person the letter was very suitable.

“Dear Sister,

*Welborn:*

“Our time is short, and our work is great. It is of the highest importance for us to double our diligence in every respect: 1. In a diligent and hearty practice of all the means of grace, knowing that it is only the diligent hand that maketh rich, and it is the diligent soul that is made fat. 2. Let it be your hourly study to be watchful over all your words, knowing that they who would see good days must keep the door of their lips. 3. Let it be your daily business to war against yourself, destroy with all your might every evil, abhor with all your heart every wrong temper. Give not the least indulgence to those passions which are contrary to the love of God and of your neighbour. Never think or say you do well to be angry, unless it be at sin; and then bear love to the sinner: much less render evil for evil to any, in thought, word, or work; but copy after the example of Him, who, when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to Him who judgeth righteously. Go thou, and do likewise. Let holiness to the Lord be the motto of all your thoughts, words, and actions. And if you walk by this rule, grace, mercy, and peace be upon you, and the whole Israel of God. I would that you should put these few directions in immediate practice. Pray for me. I am,

“Your brother and servant for Christ’s sake,

“ALEX. MATHER.”



## CHAP. XI.

*Wm. Green escapes persecution at Bradwell; procures a licence—Liberal spirit of the Marquis of Rockingham—Publications—Mrs. Crosby—Letters to and from Mr. Wesley—George Story begins to preach; meets with opposition; grows in grace—The Levick family—Mr. Tizard—Mr. Wesley preaches in the New Chapel at Rotherham; an account of the building—Letter from Mr. Hampson—T. Bryant—The first popular Collection of Hymns and Tunes—Directions for singers.*

1760. PERSECUTION continued to stalk abroad; and those who possessed its spirit availed themselves of every untoward circumstance as an argument for their conduct. Wm. Green, of Rotherham, appointed a Sabbath-day to preach at Bradwell, in Derbyshire. An unfortunate young man put an end to his existence a few days previous to it, who, in some of his interviews with them, had spoken to his friends on the subject of religion. It was reported, that the Methodists had driven him to a state of desperation, and vengeance was vowed against the first preacher that should visit the place. The friends being aware of this, stationed themselves in the different roads leading to the town, in order to prevent Wm. Green from entering. They fortunately met with him in time, and he escaped the merciless fangs of the persecutors. Some time after this, Samuel Knutton, another local preacher, who was very popular in that neighbourhood, went from Sheffield, and preached at Bradwell. His reception was favourable. The only temple in which the friends then worshipped, was an old barn.

For the purpose of greater security, William Green went to York and procured a licence, enabling him to

preach; which document bears the date of this year. This preserved him, in a few instances, from personal insult, where the places themselves were licensed in which he preached. In Rotherham it still continued the "day of small and feeble things." The *quarterly collections*, as stated in the circuit accounts kept by Wm. Green, amounted through the course of the year to £1 : 10 : 0d., to £1, and once as low as 13s. The Society, however, looked forward to better days, and seriously contemplated the erection of a preaching-house.

Such was the spirit that pervaded the breasts of the enemies of Methodism at this period, that the preachers had frequently to be guarded from place to place by some of the friends. When open violence was not convenient, wanton mischief was resorted to.

Means were employed to infuse the same spirit among the higher ranks in Society. On a public day, when several visitors were at Wentworth House, one of the company, who was warmly supported by others, introduced the subject of Methodism, expressing, at the same time, his astonishment, that the Marquis of Rockingham should suffer the Methodists to plant Societies on different parts of his estate, and even to approach so near as to surround his park. After listening some time to opinions which were pretty freely expressed, and during which a request was made to his lordship to employ his power and influence to check the progress of such schismatical proceedings, he dismissed the subject with—"You converse like country-gentlemen: are you not aware that the Methodists preach immediately under His Majesty's eye?"

In the course of the year proposals were issued for the publication of Mr. WESLEY'S Sermons, and the names of subscribers solicited. The following Tracts were now in wide circulation:—Christian Perfection—A Serious Call to the Unconverted—A Dialogue between a Methodist and his Friend—Distinguishing Marks of the Work of the Spirit—Swear not at all—A Word to a Drunkard—A Word to a Protestant—Baxter's Aphorisms—Mr. WESLEY'S Journals—Advice to Saints and Sinners—Narratives—Hymns for times of Trouble—Instructions for Children—Forms of Prayer—

United Societies—Remarks on Mr. Church's Address—Thoughts concerning Religion—Appeals—The Life of God in the Soul—View of the Moravian Brethren, &c. Upwards of seventy of some of these were ordered at once; and considering the small number of members in Society, the immense number of books and tracts sold by Wm. Green, on account of Mr. WESLEY, is truly astonishing. Mr. WESLEY's agent in London appears to have been a person of the name of Franks.

Towards the month of September, Miss Sarah Moor received a letter from Mrs. Crosby, a copy of which shall be here inserted, not only because of the pious strain in which it is written, but because of the little openings which such letters afford, though often comprised in one sentence, into the state of the Society, as to prosperity or adversity.

“Sept. 1760, *London*.

“My dear Friend,

“I TRUST your love will make allowance for my not answering your's sooner, and not impute it to neglect. I am very glad to hear you are pressing forward to the mark; *go on*, and you shall obtain the prize; the Lord whom you seek in this respect shall suddenly come to his temple. March on, nor fear to win the day, though death and hell obstruct the way. Be patient in suffering evil, and diligent in doing good: fight, wrestle, conquer, die, and live *for ever*. Jesus is your strong helper, only be simple, and lie at his feet, and you shall behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and serve Him *without* fear that hath torment, in righteousness and true holiness all the days of your life. ‘The Lord is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.’ I find him my sun and shield, my light and my defence; yea, my life, the soul of my soul: all, all I want is here. I am surrounded with mercies, and often astonished at his goodness to so poor a worm as me. My dear, help me to praise my gracious Master and my God. And when you are permitted to come into his Almighty presence, remember unworthy me.

"Our Lord is carrying on his work here. I am glad that the work prospers among you, and that my friend was a blessing to you. She is an useful woman. My friend also, the bearer of this, has been a blessing to us. I believe many are sorry for his short stay in London; but we believe his Master will be with him in the country also. I shall set out for Derby about a month hence, but cannot tell you where to direct to. Perhaps you will see Mr. H. again first, who may then be able to inform you, or bring me a letter. My love to your mother, and to all friends.

"I am, your's, in the best of bonds,

"S. CROSBY."

The Mr. H. referred to, was probably Mr. Hampson, who had now left London, and entered upon the Sheffield station. Mrs. Crosby, the writer of the letter, possessed considerable influence in the Societies where she resided. She did not reach Derby till January 8, 1761, the day after she left London; and from the rapidity of her movements, we should be led to conclude that neither the conveyance nor the roads were so deplorably bad at that period, as they are often represented. She represents Derby as "a barren place" for Methodism.\* From Derby she removed to Leeds, where she was rendered very useful as a class-leader. It is observed, in a long memoir of her†, that on the day of her dissolution, she said, "If I go now, I have neither doubt nor cloud: I know I am going to glory. I have been asking my Lord for a promise, and he says, *I will never, never leave thee.*" A little before she expired, she said to one that was present, "If I had strength, how I could praise Him!" It is added, by her biographer, "At eight o'clock, without a groan or struggle, she closed her own eyes and mouth, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. This was Oct. 24, 1804, on the eve of her spiritual birth-day, which was fifty-five years ago, and she was aged seventy-five (within a week). So composed was her countenance, that, when dead, not the least trace of death was discernible in it."

\* Meth. Mag. 1806, p 517.

† Ibid. p. 418, &c.



1761. The preaching-house which the friends in Rotherham had in contemplation last year, commenced this. An extract from a letter of William Green to Mr. WESLEY will shew the state of the Society, and the steps which had been taken towards the erection.

“ My dear Mr. W.

“ How acceptable are the few lines I have this day received from you! I have sometimes concluded you did not receive my letter, otherwise you had forgotten us. \* \* \* \* \*

I hope your Yorkshire friends will have the pleasure of seeing you once more. Do you inquire how the work of God prospers? I can bless the Lord, and say, that our dear Immanuel is working with us, and for us, daily. Jesus has even this day laid his hand on a sturdy rebel, who has been a hearer for years. He possessed much wisdom and little grace: and hence many of us looked upon him as in a very dangerous condition. But the Lord has conquered him, and wounded him in such an extraordinary manner, that he can neither work, eat, nor drink, by reason of the concern he feels for Jesus, for so it has been with him to-day; and I trust the Lord who has thus wounded will heal in his due time.

“ Many have joined our Society of late, and multitudes come to hear; so that what I have long wished for will, I hope, shortly be accomplished, viz. a House for God. The ground work is set out, and hopes are entertained that it will be up in the month of August; and O that it would please the Lord to send you down among us to preach in it the first time! O my dear Mr. W. think—think of the happy days and nights we have enjoyed together in Yorkshire! How often have our cups run over with the love of Jesus, when hearing, singing, and praying. If a drop be so sweet, what will be the fountain where we shall drink for ever? Come, my dear Sir; I will put the people again in remembrance to pray for you; and I hope the Lord will put it into your heart to visit us once more in the summer. Please to favour me with a line the first opportunity.”

The answer to this letter is not to be found; but one

of Mr. WESLEY's to Sarah Moor, dated March 3d, 1761, supplies its lack of service.

“ My dear Sister,

“ I HOPE to spend a night or two with you at Sheffield, in my return from Newcastle. Probably I may see Hallam too. I am glad to hear you are athirst for God. Look for Him. Is He not nigh at hand? Beware of unbelief. Receive a blessing now! I am,

“ Your affectionate Brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

This was some encouragement to the friends, as Mr. WESLEY had omitted to visit Sheffield and Rotherham the year preceding.

By this time, George Story began to exhort in public, under whom several persons were brought to God. Writing of this period, he remarks \*, “ A scene opened which was both painful and profitable: we took an old chapel in a neighbouring village, the inhabitants of which, in general, differed very little to the savage Indians. Here I frequently preached to large congregations, and met with plenty of persecution for my pains: but it was not unexpected, and I was determined to stand it, though it should cost me my life. One of them, a popish gentleman, hired some men to pull me out of the pulpit; though I was ignorant of their design, I providentially fixed my eye upon them as they came in. They were confounded, and stayed peaceably till the service was over. Sometimes the mob revenged themselves on the door and windows, throwing whatever came next to hand; and then followed us through the street with mire and dirt. At an adjoining village, where I was to preach, some had engaged a madman; and to qualify him more perfectly for the work, had made him drunk. He came armed with a large club, and raging in a most furious manner. I was waiting calmly for the event, when the man's wife came, and having endeavoured in vain to persuade him to go away, fell into violent fits. Seeing this, he instantly became

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\* Meth. Mag, 1782, p. 122.

as quiet as a lamb, and we returned without the least injury."

Though these are the only instances of disturbance recorded by Mr. Story, in this neighbourhood, in which he was personally interested, some of the old members of Society have not failed to notice others. Owing to the general certainty of disturbance during the service in the preaching-houses, the preacher was in the habit of noticing to his auditory that he had a license, that the magistrates would not allow them to be insulted with impunity, and that such and such a Session was at hand. We have seen in other instances, and shall have repeatedly occasion to mention, of the little dread in which the secular arm was then held, and the little reverence which was then had, for what their ignorance perhaps prevented them from knowing to be a religious assembly. One afternoon when Mr. Story was preaching in Mulberry-street Chapel, a notorious disturber from Attercliffe walked up the middle of the room with a large stick in his hand, and aimed a blow at the preacher with considerable violence, who only evaded the stroke by falling back in the pulpit. "Sirrah! thou canst not make good what thou sayest," was vociferated by the drunkard, who, when he was caught by some persons present, to be carried out, roared and struggled like a lion.—About the same period, he went to preach at Norton, about three miles from Sheffield, in company with some friends. The clergyman, who was apprized of the visit, headed several persons and drove them out of the village, forbidding them to repeat their intrusion. Alice Brammah, who possessed a good deal of courage and zeal, said, "We purpose returning, but it must be when *our* Lord sends us." The minister, either misunderstanding her, or not giving her full credit for her adoption into the family of heaven, returned, "*Your* Lord, *your* Lord, I neither care for you nor your Lord, and it will be to your advantage if you never come again."

G. Story, amidst all the opposition he met with, continued to improve in piety. After experiencing considerable depression of spirit, he says, "I was then one evening meeting my *band*, when the power of the Lord

descended in an uncommon manner, and I believed He had purified my heart. At first I rejected it under a sense of my unworthiness. But the witness again returned. I considered, 'What have I either done or suffered, that could induce the Lord to shew me this great mercy?' And I was upon the point of giving up again, when it occurred to my mind, 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.' I was then constrained to acquiesce, and said, since it is so, I will hold fast if I can. The promises, in the latter part of the 30th chap. of Ezekiel, were applied in such a manner as left no doubt but the Lord had wrought that great change in me. Nevertheless, it was not in the manner I expected. I supposed a soul saved from all sin, would be a great, wise, and glorious creature; whereas I found myself infinitely little, and mean, and base: I had such a discovery of my own nothingness, as humbled me to the dust continually. I felt myself as ignorant and helpless as an infant, and knew I could not stand a moment without the Divine aid. Nor did I find such overflowings of joy as I expected, but only an even permanent peace, which kept my heart in the knowledge and love of God. Mean time several scriptures were opened to me at once; and I found a delightful relish for the whole. But still I found, knowledge in divine things was to be acquired gradually, through patient labour; and that even this was limited: God giving no more than was necessary, and at such times as he pleased."\*

Among other places visited regularly both by local and travelling preachers, was the village of Eyam, in Derbyshire. John Levick, who died June 19, 1822, and met in the class of which Samuel Ironside is leader, heard preaching at this time in the house of Joseph Bennison, a zealous Methodist, who also died in the faith. He then resided at Eyam. George Levick, of Hunsfield, who had been long a member of the Society, was brother to John; and so also was Samuel, who was now a local preacher. The late George Levick, of

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\* Meth. Mag. 1782, p. 124.



Sheffield, of whom some notice will be taken, was nephew to these three brothers. The family were originally from Hunsfield. John Olivers was the first preacher John Levick heard; and about this period he sat under the ministry of Mr. G. Tizard, as well as Mr. Hampson.

As Mr. WESLEY had given the friends in these parts some reason to believe, that he would visit them in the course of the summer, he was occasionally reminded of his promise. In answer to a letter of Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats, he writes,—

“*Sunderland, May 29, 1761.* ✓

“My dear Sister,

“It is a long time to the first of August. Before that time, many of us may be in Abraham’s bosom. If I am at Sheffield that morning, very probably I may be at Woodseats the same day at noon. I do not know but George Tizard may be on that round some time longer. O what cause have we to praise God for all the wonders he has wrought! I am, with love to brother Booth,

“Your affectionate brother,

“J. WESLEY:

“I return to Newcastle in a day or two.”

Mr. Tizard, of whom Mr. WESLEY speaks, had been engaged as a mountebank, some time previous to his conversion to God. Having heard that Mr. Whitfield was going to preach, and that he had but one eye, he took some stones with him to deprive him of the other. In this he was thwarted, for the word of God reached his heart, and conquered his enmity. He began to itinerate in 1758 or 1759; but such were the sallies of wit in which he indulged, that it was impossible for a congregation to remain serious while he was preaching. The consequence was, that he soon left the body. This was the last circuit in which he travelled. He then became a minister among the Baptists: some time after which, and by a perfectly mountebank manœuvre, he procured episcopal ordination. The Bishop who ordained him, informed him, that he intended to send him

to the "Island of Providence." Tizard smartly replied, "I am glad of that, my Lord, for I have lived *there* all my life." Thither, he accordingly went, and officiated not only as a clergyman, but as a justice of the peace; and there he died.\*

The time at length arrived for Mr. WESLEY's return from the north. He observes, "Monday, (July 27,) I preached at Staincross about eleven; about five, at Barley-hall; the next morning at Sheffield. In the afternoon I rode on to Matlock bath. The valley which reaches from the town to the bath, is pleasant beyond expression. In the bottom of this runs a little river; close to which a mountain rises, almost perpendicular, to an enormous height, part covered with green, part with rugged and naked rocks. On the other side the mountain rises gradually, with tufts of trees here and there. The brow on both sides is fringed with trees, which seem to answer each other. Many of our friends were come from various parts. At six I preached standing under the hollow of a rock, on one side of a small plain, on the other side of which was a tall mountain. There were many well-dressed hearers, this being the high season; and all of them behaved well; but as I walked back, a gentleman-like man asked me, 'Why do you talk thus of *faith, stuff, nonsense?*' Upon inquiry, I found he was an eminent deist. What, has the plague crept into the Peak of Derbyshire?"

"Wednesday 29, I preached at five, near the bath; in Woodseats at two; and in the evening at the end of the house in Sheffield, to thrice as many people as it would have contained. Thursday and Friday I preached at Rotherham, in the shell of the new house, which is an octagon. The congregation was larger than ever: the Society well united, and much alive to God."

From thence he went into Lincolnshire, and then returned to Syke-house, August 6. He says, "I preached about nine, at Hatfield Woodhouse, and about one, at Syke-house, to far the largest congregation that has been seen there for many years. Boast who will, that 'Methodism (the revival of true religion) is just

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\* Atmore's Mem. p. 426.

coming to nothing,' we know better things, and are thankful to God for its continual increase."\*

The friends at Rotherham proceeded with the octagon preaching-house, which Mr. WESLEY, as has been noticed elsewhere, held up as a perfect model to all other chapel-builders, but to which, in the latter part of his life, he was scarcely so partial. Having consulted the documents respecting the building, the writer is enabled to lay before his readers the following abridged account. At the head of the details is written, "Monies laid out about the preaching-house in Bunting-croft, for land, materials, and workmanship, in the year 1760, by me, Wm. Green." After a particular account of every item, then follows the expense of £235 : 16 : 3½d. Succeeding this, is a statement of monies received; dated and signed, "August 29, 1763: a just account of the monies received of the subscribers, from the Conference, and also materials sold by me, Wm. Green:" to which is added the names of the subscribers, and the amount of their separate subscriptions, with a grant of £20 from Conference in 1761, and another grant of £19 from the same source in 1763; the whole of the receipts amounting to £107 : 14 : 0d.; leaving a debt of £128 : 2 : 3½d. To these particulars another account is appended, which runs thus,—“The whole amount of the monies laid out in the preaching-house at Rotherham, from 1761, to August 2, 1764, for the ground, building, vestry, plastering the ceiling, out-building, fence walls, &c. just £271 : 10 : 10d. Received by subscription and from Conference, £120 : 16 : 1d; still due £150 : 14 : 7d., with an addition of interest of £9 : 12 : 6d.” The question is then asked, “What must be done in regard to the interest?” to which is subjoined, “Although there are Quarterly Collections, they do not amount to one half of the interest for the year.”

William Green, upon whom the principal part of the responsibility devolved, and who was unremitting in his attention to the building, had his own troubles with the persons employed. The Society was poor—buildings of that description were new in Methodism—there was

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\* Journals, vol. iv. p. 79, 80.

a difficulty in getting persons to engage in the work, lest they should never be paid, such was the general opinion that prevailed; this backwardness drove the Methodists to submit to almost any terms of workmanship, and every advantage was taken by unprincipled men. One instance is recorded of a Christopher Vintin, of Deepher, who agreed with William Green, "To bring pavers at 10s. 6d. per sixteen yards, including their being squared and laid down." Vintin demanded the money on every cart being unloaded; and brought, by his own account, one hundred and twenty-nine yards, but when measured, only one hundred and nineteen. However, he received the money, and kept it, which to him was both law and justice.

At the Conference, which was held in London, and began September 1, Mr. Hampson was removed thither, from whence he wrote to Sarah Moore, October 13. After giving some directions respecting some printed letters which were to be forwarded, he says, "O Sally! I have great cause to thank God for coming to London, I have a little room, a few select friends, and often, blessed be God! very often, the presence and blessing of my Saviour to make me happy. Tell Mrs. Green, when you see her, I have now no objection to preaching. I preach more than any of our friends in London. I hope you and the rest of my dear friends at Sheffield are pressing towards the prize. God help you so to run, that you may obtain. Commend me affectionately to your mother, and all friends, particularly to J. Booth, John Rider, Henry Alsop, John Butler, and James Walker. And believe me, your's, &c.

"JOHN HAMPSON."

Every source of information has failed relative to the preachers stationed in these parts at the Conference, except one; and the only person noticed is Mr. T. Bryant, who, from William Green's account, was here January, 1762. It is very likely he was stationed here, and after the interval of a year, as will be further observed, returned to the circuit; which may, in some measure, account for the ascendancy he gained over the minds of the people, at the division of 1764.



A parcel of books was received by William Green, in the latter part of this year, amounting to £9 : 7 : 11d., which was soon followed by another : and in these parcels were a number of copies of the famous Hymn Book of 1761, which is now rarely to be met with. The copy now before the writer, and with which he has been favoured by T. Holy, Esq., being the one in which he was taught to sing the high praises of God a short time after its publication, is entitled, "Select Hymns: with Tunes annex: designed chiefly for the use of the people called Methodists. London: Printed in the year 1761." In this book are to be found *Cornish*, and all the other fine old *tunes*, so admirably calculated to inspire a spirit of devotion, and which would never have become *old*. if they had not been *excellent*, but which are now seldom heard, being supplanted by many much inferior. It may not be a little gratifying to some to know, that one of the tunes in the volume is entitled SHEFFIELD. The collection produced a good effect in these parts, and by the "Tunes annex," every worshipper became acquainted with his notes. Mr. WESLEY's object in this publication will be best understood by a reference to the Preface.

"Some years ago," says he, "a collection of tunes was published under the title of *Harmonia Sacra*. I believe all unprejudiced persons who understand music allow, that it exceeds, beyond all degrees of comparison, any thing of the kind which has appeared in *England* before; the tunes being admirably well chosen, and accurately engraven, not only for the voice, but likewise for the organ or harpsichord.

"But this, though it is excellent in its kind, is not the thing which I want. I want the people called Methodists to sing true, the tunes which are in common use among them. At the same time I want them to have in one volume, the best hymns which we have printed : and that, in a small and portable volume, and one of an easy price.

"I have been endeavouring for more than twenty years to procure such a book as this. But in vain: masters of music were above following any direction but

their own. And I was determined, whoever compiled this, should follow my direction: not mending our tunes, but setting them down, neither better nor worse than they were. At length I have prevailed. The following collection contains all the tunes which are in common use among us. They are pricked true, exactly as I desire all our congregations may sing them: and here is prefixt to them a collection of those hymns which are (I think) some of the best we have published. The volume likewise is small, as well as the price. This therefore I recommend, preferably to all others."

There are one hundred and thirty-two hymns in the volume, which form the first part. After an index to the hymns, the gamut, and other instructions for learning music follow; and then the tunes appropriated to the several hymns, with an additional index. The volume, which it might be useful to republish as a corrective to the vitiated musical taste which prevails in some of our congregations through the kingdom, closes with, "That your singing may be more acceptable to God, as well as the more profitable to yourself and others, be careful to observe the following directions;—

"1. LEARN *these tunes* before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.

"2. Sing them *exactly* as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.

"3. Sing *all*. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you; if it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.

"4. Sing *lustily* and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

"5. Sing *modestly*. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinctly from the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

“6. Sing in *time* : whatever time is sung, be sure to keep it. Do not run before or stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care you sing not too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy, and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

“7. Above all sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature. In order to this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.”

These directions could not fail to produce good congregational singing; and this is what is much wanted. We can no more sing by proxy, than we can pray by proxy. We must praise God for ourselves.

## CHAP. XII.

*Account of Messrs. Rankin, Nelson, and Clough—Mr. Wesley preaches in Sheffield—George Story proposed to travel—Muster-y-street Chapel enlarged, with some peculiarities—James Vickers—An exemplification of brotherly love---Preaching at Doncaster---Messrs. Bryant, Levick, and Brammah---Mr. Whitfield preaches in the Methodist Chapel---A letter from James Clough---Wm. Pennington---Mr. Bryant frustrated in an attempt to dissolve a meeting---A pulpit controversy---Mrs. Brammah's visit to Cornwall.*

1762. IN a memoir of Mr. Thomas Rankin, written by himself, he remarks, "I went to the Conference, held at Leeds, in July, 1762, where I was appointed to the Sheffield circuit, and had for my companions John Nelson, Wm. Ingill, and James Clough. The Sheffield circuit, at that time, extended to Leicester on the south, and beyond Barnsley in the north. The work of the Lord prospered, but particularly in Sheffield and Rotherham. Many were added to the Society, and several brought to know the justifying and sanctifying influences of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, with several other places, particularly partook of the revival."\* Mr. Rankin, who commenced the work of an itinerant preacher only a few months before he arrived in these parts, was born at Dunbar, in the shire of East-Lothian, in the year 1739. After preaching the gospel in England, he embarked for America, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Webb, and Messrs. Shadford and Yerbury, in 1773; where he remained upwards of five years, and then returned to his native country. He continued to itinerate till 1783, when he was appointed a supernumerary for London. He died May 17, 1810, full of years and full of grace. While he was here, he laboured with success. "I had

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\* Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 728.



not been long in the round," says he, "till God broke into my soul with such power, as totally removed all my doubts and fears of my call to the work I was engaged in, and made the word a blessing to many souls. Indeed, for several months, wherever I went, the word of God was like a flame of fire; and I found a restoration of that close communion with God, that I had experienced some months before. In the midst of this prosperity from within and from without, some persons in the round began to cavil at the doctrine of Christian holiness: at first, I was grieved for the souls that were hurt, and then was tempted to oppose them who were opposing the work of God. What through grief and temptation, my mind was hurt, and something bordering on resentment took place: and, although I did not lose a sense of the presence of God, yet I lost that constant witness of Christ being all in all to me." \*

John Nelson was well known in the neighbourhood; and it must have been a source of great satisfaction to the friends, to have one appointed to them to mature the good work which had been fostered by him in its infancy. Of Wm. Ingill, not any thing can be said: he is not once named either by Mr. Myles or Mr. Atmore. James Clough, the last preacher noticed by Mr. Rankin, who was in the *round*, as circuits were then called, came originally from Rochdale, in Lancashire. He entered on the work of the Methodist ministry in 1763, according to Mr. Myles, and in 1760, according to Mr. Atmore; the last statement is probably the most correct. He desisted from the labours of an itinerant life in 1774, and settled at Leicester, where he acted in the capacity of a local preacher to the period of his death, which took place in 1795. †

Very soon after the appointment of these good men to the circuit, Mr. WESLEY paid a visit to Sheffield. He says, "Sunday, August 15, I preached about one at Birstal, and in the morning and evening at Leeds. I then rode about eighteen miles: on Monday morning I preached at Sheffield, and in the evening came to Derby. I had sent word, that I did not intend to

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\* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 195.

† Meth. Mem. p. 75.

preach. But after I had rested a-while in my chamber, coming down and finding the house full of people, I spoke to them half an hour in a familiar manner, and then spent some time in prayer. I believe God touched some of their hearts. Indeed it seemed none were unmoved." \* There is a difference as to the precise time in which the Conference was held, between Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Rankin. The latter states it to have been held in July, and the former, in the same page from whence the extract has just been made, informs us, that it commenced Tuesday, August 10. Mr. WESLEY very likely published from his MS. journal written at the time, and Mr. Rankin depended upon memory, after a lapse probably of some years.

It was at this Conference, that George Story, who had now laboured some time as a local preacher, was proposed to travel. His own account of the circumstances which led to it is as follows:—"The Conference being at Leeds," says he, "I attended with a design of edifying by the public discourses and private conversation of the preachers. And herein I had abundant reason to be satisfied. Mr. WESLEY's sermons were in a peculiar manner calculated for establishing me in what I had lately experienced. During the Conference it appeared there wanted several more preachers as itinerants, in different circuits. My friends proposed me for one, and asked if I had any objection. As I was resigned to any station Providence seemed to point out, I submitted to the judgment of my brethren. Being admitted on trial, I returned home to settle my affairs; and in the latter end of February, 1763, I went into the Dales circuit." †. This worthy man continued to travel in various parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, till the year 1792, when he was appointed editor of the Methodist Magazine, and other publications, and a few years after superintendant of the printing-office, the duties of which departments he discharged to the satisfaction of the Conference, and to his own credit, till his various infirmities rendered it necessary that he should be released from them. He was a successful preacher;

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\* Journals, vol. iv. p. 125.

† Meth. Mag. 1762, p. 126.

and this is not surprising, if we are to take the excellent sermon as a specimen of his discourses in general, which is published in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1799 \*, entitled, "The Scriptural Method of Believing in order to obtain present and eternal Salvation," founded on John, vi. 22. His piety was genuine, and uniformly evidenced by an unblameable life and conversation. In his views of Christianity, in all its branches, he was clear and correct, and in his attachment to every part of Methodism, he was steady. The weakness attendant on age came very gradually upon him, till within a few months of his death, when his strength of body and faculties of mind decayed apace. His end was as peaceful and serene, as his life had been meek, gentle, and temperate. A short time before his death, to a friend who asked him concerning his prospects into eternity, he said, "I feel Christ to be more precious to my soul than ever." He died May 22, 1818, in the 80th year of his age.† Mr. Southey, in his *Life of Mr. WESLEY*‡, pays him a high compliment, and considers him the only instance among the Methodist preachers of one living in the midst of enthusiasm without being affected with it.

1763. Through the increase of members referred to by Mr. Rankin, and with them an increase of hearers, an enlargement of Mulberry-street preaching-house was proposed; and in this, the Society found a friend in the mother of Thomas Holy, Esq., who appeared to have been raised up both by Providence and grace to be ready for this "time of need." When the old building was first entered upon, it was much prized with its unplastered walls; but now, instead of twelve yards by ten, it was to be enlarged twelve yards by eighteen, with the addition of a gallery, of which it was destitute before, the same pillars supporting both roof and gallery. Mrs. Holy was to lend the money requisite for this enlargement, and T. Holy, Esq. well recollects the pleasure he took in viewing the building after it was completed. The males and females sat apart, each occupying their distinct sides of the building, a custom generally observed in the early stages of Methodism; and

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\* P. 8. † Meth. Mag. 1818, p. 553, 704.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 145—153.

the seats were without backs. While the first obviated in a great measure the reproaches thrown upon the first Methodists, the latter promoted wakefulness during preaching. Both of these were agreeable to rule. "Q. Is any thing farther advisable with regard to these houses? A. In all future buildings, let all the windows be sashed, opening downwards; let there be no tub-pulpits; and no backs to the seats. Q. Should the men and women sit apart every where? A. By all means. Every preacher should look to this."\*

In the course of this year, Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, entered on his eternal rest, and left a widow and nine children to lament his loss.

The same prosperity which characterized Sheffield in 1762, distinguished it in the present year. In a letter from Mr. James Oddy to Sarah Moore, dated Bristol, February 5, 1763, he observes, "It gives me joy to hear, that the great and good work prospers among you; and particularly that you desire for yourself, 'to sink into humility and rise into the life of God.' The way to ascend is to descend. There have been here some conversions lately, and some quickening their pace towards perfection; and one is now dying in a most triumphant and glorious state."

Among those who joined the Methodist Society at this time, were the late Mr. James Vickers and his wife; the latter of whom died in 1802, and the former, April 11, 1809. Such was the general poverty of the Society when they became members, that it was found impracticable to pay a person for taking care of the chapel; and hence the principal members kept the key, locked and unlocked the doors alternately. The few persons who possessed property had large demands made upon their benevolence from various other quarters.—It was from James Vickers, that the Britannia metal, so much admired, and in such general use, received its name; his son, Mr. John Vickers, now carries on the business, in Garden-street. When James Vickers first became a Methodist, he had to participate in the treatment received by the Society from the profligate part of the

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\* Minutes, vol. i. p. 49.



inhabitants of the town. On one occasion his temper was not a little tried by having a bucket of bullock's blood thrown upon a suit of new clothes which he had put on for the first time. But he met the storm like a Christian, and came out of each succeeding one the same in substance in which he entered. He was the first who set on foot, and was one of the principal subscribers to the Sunday-School in Garden-street, built in 1789, and now in the occupation of the Established Church. The last fourteen or fifteen years of his life were chiefly devoted to the interests of public charities, such as the Infirmary, Sunday-Schools, &c.

It is pleasing to reflect on the ardent desire which was awakened in the breasts of many for the salvation of others. John Burdett, who was now a leader in the Society in Sheffield, felt a serious concern for the salvation of his brother-in-law, Mr. Thomas Scales, then of Brierley, near Barnsley. Mr. Scales, together with his wife, visited Mr. Francis Burdett, of Fall-head, near Silkstone, his father-in-law. John had frequently spoken to Mr. Scales on the subject of personal religion, but to little purpose. He on this occasion induced Mr. Joseph Shaw, of Staincross, to accompany him to Fall-head. Their intention was, if possible, to procure an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Scales on the things of God; but on their arrival in the evening, he was engaged with several other persons playing at cards; they sent for him into another room, saying they wished for his company. On hearing their desire, and knowing well their intention, conviction seized his mind; and he instantly threw down the cards, and resolved from that moment never to be found more with such company or in such employment. He then went to them, and they began to speak to him on divine subjects, as they deemed him able to bear the same, proposing a variety of questions, that they might judge of the real state of his mind, and how, in the most effectual manner, to direct their discourse. After conversation of considerable length, they perceived that God had begun a good work in his heart, as many of his answers discovered a degree of religious light, and a real concern to flee from the wrath to come. The impressions already made upon his soul were, by

this conversation, which lasted some hours, very much deepened; and on his return home to Brierley, he took the cards then in the house and committed them to the flames, determining they should no more prove a snare either to himself or others. He soon afterwards joined the Methodist Society, in which he continued a member to the day of his death, which took place June 23, 1814, in the 81st year of his age. Some of his last words were, "I find my Jesus to be a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He requested the friends who attended him, just a little before his death, to lift him up and set him upon his feet: when they asked the reason, knowing his extreme weakness, he replied, "To praise my God once more."\* Mr. George Sargant, who has given a short memoir of Mr. Scales, states, through some mistake, that Messrs. Peter Jaco, Paul Greenwood, and Christopher Hopper, were the preachers now stationed on the Sheffield circuit.†

Mr. WESLEY'S nearest approach to Sheffield this year, was Doncaster, at which place he preached. Frequently as he had passed through that populous town, this is the first time in which preaching is recorded; and as it is often noticed afterwards, we may infer that this was the first favourable opening he had for the purpose of addressing the people, and that soon after a society was formed. "Wednesday, June 15, I rode to Doncaster," says he, "and at ten, standing in an open place, exhorted a wild, yet civil multitude, to seek the Lord while he might be found. Thence I went on to Leeds." ‡

At the Conference held in London, July 19—23, Mr. Thomas Bryant was appointed for the Sheffield circuit, as one of the preachers for the year: and Samuel Levick and William Brammah, who had both filled the office of local preachers in the circuit, were proposed to travel. Samuel Levick was brother to the late John, and uncle to the late George Levick, of Sheffield. He was a young man of genuine piety, and zealous in promoting the interests of religion in the world. In a letter from Sligo, where he was in 1767, we read, "Brother

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\* Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 127, 128. † Ibid. p. 127. Journals, vol. iv. p. 154.

Levick has been in this circuit for half a year, and the blessing of God seems to attend his labours. Several of the army here, and a few of the town's people are awakened; some of whom are lately come to an experimental knowledge of the truth." \* He continued faithfully to preach the gospel, till in 1771 the Lord was pleased to take him to his great reward. His death was more than peaceful—it was joyful. His name, through a typographical error, is spelt Lerick in Mr. Myles's History, and the period for the commencement of his itinerancy is fixed for 1753, instead of 1763.† William Brammah's first appointment was to Redruth in Cornwall, to which place he journeyed, leaving his wife in Sheffield.

Though Sheffield had long been considered the head of a circuit, yet it was not till this Conference it was published as such to the world, as included in the thirty-one circuits into which the three kingdoms were divided. ‡

"Either a little prior to, or after the Conference, Mr. George Whitfield visited Sheffield, and preached in Mulberry-street Chapel. A person who heard him preach, informed the writer that his text was, "And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement," Rom. v. 11. In applying the subject, he told his auditory, that it was probable many of them had the register of their natural birth in their Bibles, and possibly some of them the period when they were "born again;" but a point of prime importance, and a question which they should be able satisfactorily to answer was, "Am I born of God now?" From Mr. WESLEY's account of him, who had seen him in Edinburgh in the month of May, he must have been ill able to sustain the duties of the ministerial office. "I had the satisfaction," says he, "of spending a little time with Mr. Whitfield. Humanly speaking, he is worn out. But we have to do with Him, who hath all power in heaven and earth." ||

James Clough, of whom something has been said, and who left the circuit at the Conference for Ireland,

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\* Meth. Mag. 1783, p. 444. † Ibid. p. 448. ‡ Myles's Hist. p. 100.  
|| Journals, vol. iv. p. 149.

writes thus from Dublin, September 4th, to Sarah Moore: "May grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied to you. We had a very rough passage, and no one was so sick as myself. I labour under the effects of it now, but hope I shall soon recover. The people at Dublin I like exceedingly well, and I hope my coming here will be attended with a blessing to my own soul. God grant it may prove so to the souls of others! I find my soul alive to God, and have this determination—to know nothing save Christ and him crucified." Sarah, there is no true happiness but in God. As you are brought into the light, walk in the light, till the blood of Christ cleanseth you from all sin. O, pray for me, I hope I shall not forget to pray for you." He then requests Sarah to remember him kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Twigg, Effie Bartle, Mrs. Chambers, William and Hannah Ragg, Henry Alsop, Mrs. Ratcliff, and Mrs. Hall, and to Mr. and Mrs. Green of Rotherham, with several others unnoticed any where else; thus exemplifying, as in the present day, the fact of preachers gliding, through particular circumstances, and without any previous intention on their part, into a closer intimacy with some members and families than their predecessors, while others on the most familiar terms with the preachers who may have left the circuit, are only noticed in common with the other members of society. Hence, while some of the preachers indulge a preference, some of the people are only heard to dwell with rapture on the names and excellencies of only two or three out of the scores who may have travelled the circuit and ministered to them in holy things. This, though sometimes arising out of office, superior piety, eminent intellectual endowments, native disposition, family connexions, a casual introduction, and a thousand other things, perfectly as innocent as the friendship itself, may be carried to an extravagant length, and may prove prejudicial to usefulness. While some valuable names are omitted by Mr. Clough, there are others which we are happy to recognize, and which, but for him, might have remained unknown in Methodism. He informs his correspondent, that "Brother Pennington sends his Christian love to



Sarah Moore;" a communication which implies a knowledge of the person—a knowledge acquired probably from his having laboured in this town and neighbourhood; and hence another name appears on the page of history rescued from the oblivion into which others have sunk by whom the circuit has been benefited. William Pennington was born near Knaresborough, about 1734. He gave himself up to the work of an itinerant preacher in 1760, and in 1767 took a fever in the city of Dublin, during the progress of which he travelled to Athlone, where he languished about ten days, and died Nov. 22, leaving a wife and child to the care of a kind Providence. His remains were deposited in the church-yard at Athlone, and the following scripture engraved upon his tomb: "The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity." Mal. ii. 6. \*

Mr. Bryant, now on the circuit, is one of those preachers of whom Mr. Atmore has not so much as preserved the name. Should this have been occasioned by a want of information, the following notices may serve to illustrate a part of his personal history. He is mentioned by William Green at this period, whose account-book, and other MSS., have proved of essential service to the writer, when minutes and all other printed documents have failed. When Mr. Bryant came into the circuit he was remarkably popular, but was perfectly opposed to every thing bordering upon noise. The select band, which was met at William Brammah's, and continued by his wife after he left the town, was distinguished for all those peculiarities attendant on a revival of religion. The house in which the meeting was held is yet standing in Fargate, one of those old buildings nearly opposite the top of Norfolk-row. Thither Mr. Bryant hastened to break up the meeting, and to put a stop to what he deemed irregularity. When he entered the house, he found the friends engaged in fervent prayer, —a hearty "amen" closing each period. The latter might prove a little too loud for him at first; but such

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\* Meth. Mem. p. 314.

was the Divine power that accompanied the prayer, that his heart began to melt and give way,—and his heart being affected, his ear soon became tuned to the response. He found that the case was scarcely so desperate as it had been represented; and instead of threatening and putting on the face of a lion, as he had done previous to his going to the place, he retired like a lamb. It was a time of refreshing to him from the presence of the Lord.

Among the persons who became serious, several professed to have received the forgiveness of sins. This, though no new doctrine either in Methodism or in Sheffield, occasioned a great deal of conversation from the number of its disciples, and was opposed by the Rev. George Bayliffe,\* in a sermon delivered in the Parish Church of Sheffield. He did not only hold up the doctrine as erroneous, but very unguardedly stated, that those who were so eminently endowed would be enabled to work miracles, and therefore demanded miracle as a proof of the truth of their profession. Mr. Bryant, on the other hand, took up the subject in Mulberry-street Chapel, and refuted what was delivered to him as the statement of Mr. Bayliffe, establishing the doctrine on the testimony of Scripture, the Homilies, Liturgy, &c. of the Established Church, and shewing that miracles were not necessarily connected with the remission of sins. He further stated, that though the ordinary course of nature had not been reverted, he could nevertheless furnish Mr. Bayliffe with a few specimens which might be denominated *miracles of grace*,—not as effected by man, but by the Lord, through man's instrumentality; drunkards becoming sober, the lewd returning to chastity; with several other changes of character and disposition equally astonishing. It did not terminate here, for Jeremiah Cocker, who had ere this period begun to act in the capacity of a local preacher, published a small pamphlet in defence of the doctrine, and consequently against the opposite theory entertained by Mr. Bayliffe. Many have been the fruit-

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\* See Hunter's History of Hallamshire, p. 203, for a biographical notice of this divine.

less attempts of the writer to procure a copy of this pamphlet, but he could proceed no further than that of conversing with those who had seen it and read it soon after its publication, pronouncing it at the same time to have been written with ability.

1764. After the lapse of several months, Alice, the wife of William Brammah, sold part of her household utensils to enable her to proceed to Cornwall to see her husband. Mrs. Holy, afraid she would scarcely have sufficient for her journey, lent her some money, telling her, that, if she should not be able to repay it, to preserve her mind perfectly at rest, as it would never be required under any other circumstances than those of ability. This good, but eccentric woman, left Sheffield for Redruth, in Cornwall, on foot, and walked the whole of the way. When she was within a few stages of the destined place, she met an ill-looking man, who solicited alms. Supposing him possessed of a wicked design on either her life or her property, she gave him a half-crown, the whole of the money she had left after the regular expenses and other charities on the road. She proceeded on her route, seeing nothing more of the man, and before she had gone far, she found a half-crown lying on the road, which took her to the end of her journey. Here she marked a kind Providence. On her arrival at Redruth, she inquired for the Methodists, and was directed to their place of worship, where she found her husband engaged in a prayer-meeting with the friends. Being pretty loud in her responses, her husband, when he heard them, lifted up his eyes in astonishment, and was apprehensive that it was her apparition, not having had the slightest intimation of such a visit. They met after the meeting, but alas! there was not a home to which to take her, no provision having been made for a wife. This lack was soon supplied. Anxious to be useful, she went from house to house as she had been wont to do in Sheffield, gathering up backslideres, visiting the sick, and praying with the people in general. Such was the attachment the friends entertained towards her, that a house was provided, several persons uniting and supplying what they could spare of their own different articles of furniture. The

whole county of Cornwall was at this time one circuit; but on Mr. Rankin's arrival there, the preachers were obliged to divide it into two; three preachers supplying the west, and three the eastern part. Wm. Brammah had been favoured with the whole county to range in, but was now confined to the west with Messrs. Rankin and Stevens.\* Mr. Rankin, speaking of the felicity he enjoyed, says, "In this happy frame of mind I continued till I reached Redruth. I had little or no acquaintance with those who were to be my fellow-labourers, except two of them; one of whom (Wm. Brammah) I could truly depend on, as a man, whose soul was wholly in the work of God. As soon as I had time to converse a little with our friends, I found that brother Brammah and his wife had not been idle, the few days they had been in Redruth before me. The first evening I preached, the Lord was pleased to give me an earnest of what he was about to do in this town, as well as in all the circuit. Ten or twelve were awakened under the sermon."† Nearly one thousand persons joined the different Societies in the course of the year. This revival of religion is noticed by others than the preachers engaged in it.‡ When Mrs. Brammah returned from Cornwall, she was a little more elevated than a traveller on foot, for she rode through Sheffield on an ass; a circumstance which a Methodist need not blush to notice, since Alice is now kept in countenance by ladies of fashion, who, notwithstanding the stubborn temper of some of these animals, are fond of ambling out upon them.

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\* Meth. Mag, 1811, p. 729.    † Ibid.    ‡ Ibid. for 1804, p. 197:



## CHAP. XIII.

*Mr. Wesley preaches at Sheffield, Rotherham, and Doncaster—Grace Bennet—Jonathan Lindley, his great benevolence—Division of public instructors—A letter from Mr. Wesley—Mr. Bryant occasions some uneasiness in the Society at Sheffield—Letter from Mr. Eastwood—A notice of Mr. Lee—A division in the Sheffield Society—Mr. Wesley's disposition to conciliate both parties.*

1764. Mr. WESLEY visited Sheffield and the neighbourhood in the month of March. "Thursday 29," says he, "between eleven and twelve, I preached at Alfreton, twelve miles from Derby, and in the evening, at Sheffield, to many more than could hear\*, on 'Now is the day of this salvation.' In the morning, I gave a hearing to several of the Society, who were extremely angry at each other: it surprised me to find what trifles they had stumbled at; but I hope their snare is broken†. In the evening, while I was enlarging upon 'the righteousness of faith,' the word of God was quick and powerful: many felt it in their inmost souls; one backslider in particular, who was then restored to all she had lost; and the next morning believed she was saved from sin.

"Friday 30, I met those who believe God has redeemed them from all their sins: they are about sixty in number: I could not learn that any among them walk unworthy of their profession: many watch over them for evil; but they overcome evil with good: I found nothing of self-conceit, stubbornness, impatience of contradiction, or London enthusiasm among them ‡.

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\* Though preparatory steps had been taken for the enlargement of Mulberry-street Chapel, as noticed in the preceding chapter, and some alterations had taken place, yet the walls were untouched.

† Some uneasiness had ere this been excited relative to Mr. Bryant, of which this was probably either the thing itself, or an emanation.

‡ Referring to the religious reveries of George Bell and his followers.

They have better learned of Him that was meek and lowly of heart, to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

“ In the evening, I preached in the new house at Rotherham, on the sure foundation, ‘ Ye are saved through faith.’ It was a season of strong consolation to many. One who had been, for some time, groaning for full redemption, now found power to believe, that God had fulfilled her desire, and set her heart at liberty. Saturday 31, an odd circumstance occurred during preaching. It was well only serious people were present. An ass walked gravely in at the gate, came up to the door of the house, lifted up his head, and stood stock still, in a posture of deep attention. Might not *the dumb beast reprove* many who have far less decency, and not much more understanding?

“ At noon, I preached (the room being too small to contain the people) in a yard, near the bridge, in Doncaster. The wind was high, and exceedingly sharp, and blew all the time on the side of my head. In the afternoon, I was seized with a sore throat, almost as soon as I came to Epworth. However, I preached, though with some difficulty; but afterward I could hardly speak.”\*

It was probably on this visit that Grace Bennet came over the moors from Derbyshire to hear Mr. WESLEY. She overtook a gentleman on horseback, as her niece, who resides in Sheffield, observed, whom she found to be a churchwarden. In the course of conversation, the Methodists were noticed; the subject produced an oath from the gentleman, when she took occasion to reprove him. He was much enraged, and threatened to horse-whip her. On pronouncing the threat, she told him that he must first obtain permission of her Father in heaven, pointing upward at the same time. He asked with a half-cooled sneer, whether the Lord had any thing to do with such as her, and whether she knew any thing of Him? She replied in the affirmative; shewed him the impropriety of his conduct as a professing pillar of the church; and informed him that he would acquire

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\* Journals, vol. iv. pp. 184, 185.

a more correct knowledge of God than he possessed, if he would attend Mulberry-street Chapel that evening, in which there would be Divine service. To her surprise, she saw the person there in the evening; and during the whole of the service he was much affected, wiping the tears from his face as they kept trickling from his eyes. On another occasion, but supposed to be anterior to this, when the mob arose and disturbed Mr. WESLEY while he was preaching out of doors, she had a custard thrown at her, which besmeared her face, head-dress, and riding habit. She scraped off the rough contents, and was thankful that she was accounted worthy to suffer for the gospel.

The good work of grace noticed by Mr. Rankin in the preceding chapter, continued to extend its influence over the hearts of many in the town and neighbourhood of Rotherham, as well as in Sheffield. Of the places in which preaching had been once established, Thribergh was perhaps the only exception where there was at this time a declension, occasioned probably by the death and removal of the Lowley family.\* This, however, was in a great measure made up by the formation of a Society at Thribergh forge. There was a person of the name of Jonathan Lindley, born at Darfield, a village near Barnsley, in 1735, who, on his marriage, in 1759, removed to the iron works at Masbrough, near Rotherham, carried on by Messrs. Walkers and Company. This man was in the employ of the Messrs. Walkers, "one of whose family," says Mr. T. Taylor, "had been in the Methodist connexion, but embracing the principles of Calvinism, he and some others separated themselves from the connexion, and a preacher, of the name of Sharp, who separated at the same time, became their minister."† Instead of *one* of the Walker family, Mr. Taylor might have said *two* of them had been members of the Methodist Society. John Thorpe is no doubt the minister intended, whose name has been me-

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\* The property of Madam Finch, to whom Mr. Lowley was steward, devolved to John Fullerton, Esq. The old hall is pulled down in which this lady, the friend and patroness of Mr. Lowley, lived, and the present Thribergh-hall built in its stead, the residence of her heir.

† Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 684.

transformed into Sharp by the printer. Under his ministry Jonathan Lindley sate for some time, but at length joined the Methodist Society. Jonathan was never intended for any thing great in the order of Providence, but he was what he professed to be, a sincere, humble Christian. He once thought himself called to preach, and made some attempts, but a judicious friend told him he believed he was mistaken, advising him at the same time to do all the good he could in a private way, in visiting the sick, in meetings for prayer, or in the class. He bowed with submission to the counsel of his friend, and gave up all thoughts of becoming a preacher. In the way in which his friend advised him to proceed, Jonathan was rendered extensively useful: and such is the peculiar genius of Methodism, that, as God intends every talent to be employed, so every talent can be brought into full exercise in its economy. It would perhaps be a work of less difficulty, than at first might appear, to assign to each preacher in the Methodist body, both local and travelling, his proper title, and so appoint him his proper work. A few judicious persons might effect this. On some of the plans, it is delightful to see some individuals distinguished from others, under the head of *exhorters*. It is an approach to the apostolic constitution, in which we find public instructors divided into Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, Exhorters, and Rulers. From the hackneyed method of taking a text, and from the mistaken notion that there is something degrading in the character of an exhorter, persons very often leap into preachers at once. By making a proper distinction, a very moderate share of talent may go a long way in the church of God. This lesson has been learnt in part, and Methodism is not ashamed to own it. She can find employment for only one talent: and while she is as careful as circumstances will admit, not to put one talent in the place of five, five in the place of ten, she is far from discouraging the most humble attempts to do good. She tells her disciples, that if they can neither roll with the thunder of Demosthenes, nor flash with the lightning of Cicero, not to disdain to stammer out the love of God to man



in social life as private Christians. It was thus she spoke to Jonathan Lindley, and thus he acted.

Some particulars respecting this good man, it may be useful to notice in this history. "He removed from Masbrough to Thribergh forge," says Mr. Taylor, "some miles below Rotherham, and as there was neither preaching nor place of worship near, he got the local preachers to come and establish a prayer-meeting; for for being deeply and feelingly concerned for the salvation of his neighbours, he was willing to do every thing in his power to attain that blessed end.

"The liberal soul deviseth liberal things; he requested the travelling preachers to come to his house, which they did, once a fortnight, for years; Jonathan entertaining them without assistance from any one. Nor did he desire any help; it was a sufficient reward to Jonathan, that his neighbours had the gospel preached to them, and that some received the truth in the love thereof, and it was always a cause of grief to him if any thing happened to prevent the minister from attending. A small society was formed, and I and my colleagues regularly preached on the Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, and from thence went forward to Doncaster. It is true Jonathan could not accommodate us in an elegant way, either in bed or board, but he gave us the best he could afford; and I, for my own part, found myself satisfied and thankful under his homely roof.

"Our worthy brother had a generous soul, not only in aiding the cause of God, but in other respects also, which fell in his way. A poor child, who, his father being dead, had been turned adrift in the wide world, and was deplorably filthy and ragged, fell into the hands of Jonathan, who took him in, stripped him of his filthy rags, and got him cured of the itch, of which he was ill, and after some time put him apprentice to a hatter. Soon after, another poor forlorn orphan came in his way, who was wont to beg in the day-time, and at night to sleep among the ashes by the furnace-fire. This poor helpless creature, Jonathan took compassion on, stripped off his rags, which were only fit for the flames, got him into a tub of water, and washed and

cleaned him; clothed him, both for week days, and also very decently for Sabbath days, sent him to school just as if he had been his own child; and when of a proper age, put him apprentice to a carpenter. By the time he had well got rid of him, another, exactly of the same description, came about begging, and took up his lodging at the furnace-fire; him also Jonathan took up, and he underwent the same process as the former. This boy was with him when I used to go to his house in 1782; and I am sure he could not have treated him with more tenderness if he had been Jonathan's own son. He clothed him decently, and had him taught to read, and if I mistake not, to write also; and when he was old enough put him apprentice at Sheffield to a cutler.\* Now, I may venture to say, those three lads could not cost this poor labouring man less than a hundred and fifty pounds. I might mention likewise, a poor girl, who found shelter under his roof for some considerable time, till she got into a place as a servant. Hear this, ye who grudge giving a penny or twopence weekly, and a shilling or two in a quarter, to help the cause of God, or in charity to the poor; although in your days of sin and vanity you spent twice, nay, perhaps, ten times as much, in gratifying your sensual appetites.†" It was for an act of kindness that our Lord said, "Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her."‡ Jonathan Lindley removed from Thribergh to a place near Wakefield, where he continued to sustain the same Christian character, had the superintendence of a class, and finished his course with joy in 1810.

In returning to Sheffield, we find the Society in a state of considerable agitation. Mr. WESLEY, who was at Leeds, and who had probably been written to on the subject, addressed Sarah Moore thus by letter:—

✓      "My dear Sister,                      *Leeds, July 5, 1764.*  
 "I am fully convinced, that T. Bryant's staying

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\* The person to whom he was bound was the late Mr. Henry Longden.  
 † Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 685, 686.      ‡ Matth. xxvi. 13.

another year in Sheffield circuit, would neither be good for him, nor for the people. I know his strength, and I know his weakness. But he shall go no further than the Leeds circuit, from whence he may now and then drop over to Sheffield, and the Sheffield preacher to Leeds.

“Sally, see that you walk circumspectfully. The eyes of many are upon you: and above all, the eye of God! I am,

“Your affectionate brother,

“J. WESLEY.”

Sarah Moore, partly probably through the influence of her mother, who warmly espoused the cause of Mr. Bryant, appears to have indulged too much the spirit of a meddler on the present occasion. One of the causes of contention was the clerical appearance and character assumed by Mr. Bryant, who, in consequence of having been ordained by a Greek Bishop who visited England in 1760, considered himself entitled to wear a gown in the pulpit. This was one of the “trifles,” noticed by Mr. WESLEY, at which some of the members “stumbled,” and for which they “were extremely angry at each other.” Having proved an occasion of offence to some, Mr. Bryant was advised to throw it aside, to which he and his friends objected. Here was the core of dissension; and it is remarkable, in tracing Ecclesiastical History, that some of the most serious divisions in the Christian Church have originated in either non-essential doctrines or insignificant appendages added to the office or the person of the minister: men busying themselves about “mint, and anise, and cummin,” while omitting “the weightier matters of the law,”—attending to the habiliments of the body, while neglecting the momentous concerns of the soul.

Mr. WESLEY's object in this intricate affair was threefold,—to preserve Mr. Bryant to the body, by granting him another station,—to remove him from the scene of contention, in order to prevent matters from becoming worse,—and yet to make it agreeable to both Mr. Bryant and his friends, allowing the distance to be such as to admit of an occasional interview. This pro-

posals was not acceded to, and an apparent suspension seems to have taken place by one of the Leeds preachers coming over to supply his lack of service. This preacher was Mr. J. Eastwood, a man who appears to have been in the neighbourhood before, but who, like several other early labourers, is unknown in Methodist history, and is just snatched from utter oblivion by the following letter, addressed to the same person as the above, and directed to be left at Mr. WESLEY'S lodgings, Sheffield.

“ Scholes \*, July 23, 1764.

“ Dear Sister,

“ I purpose, God willing, to be at Denby-dike, on Monday the 6th of August, at seven o'clock in the evening; at Bradwell on Tuesday night; at Sheffield on Wednesday and Thursday nights; at Rotherham on Friday night; and at Staincross on my return at one o'clock on Saturday. Pray send word to the Paper-house \* of my intention, and they will forward it to Denby-dike; seeing that I cannot, on account of it being such a bye-place, get intelligence thither. I shall expect Benjamin, or some good friend, either at Denby-dike † on Monday night, or at the Paper-house on Tuesday morning, to pilot me over the inhospitable and almost impassable moors and mountains. I should not be sorry to see some of my Sheffield friends at Bradwell.

“ Since I saw you, some of the finest springs of nature have been tried. God has been graciously pleased to take my dear little girl to himself. But the dead is alive, the lost is found. I rest assured, that though she shall not return to me, I shall go to her.

“ I am glad to hear that the wilderness becomes in such a wonderful manner a fruitful field. May the Lord still add to your number and to your graces! It gives me pleasure to hear that the people are recovering their senses, though I am concerned (oh, grief of heart to think!) that my brethren of the cloth have been ready thereat to run—*mad*. The wisdom of God, I yet find,

\* Near Thorpe.  
of Barnsley.

† Near Thurlstone.

‡ About 10 miles west



is foolishness with men; nevertheless, through the foolishness of preaching, He still saves those that believe; so that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men. 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

"Pray be so good, let me again request you, as to send word to all the afore-mentioned places, if possible; and to what other places you judge proper, with the time of preaching at each. But you should remember that, to forget Betty Booth, will be the ready way to make her think of you. My wife joins in love to you and all the dear friends.

"Your affectionate friend and servant,  
"J. EASTWOOD."

This female, who seems to have had a pretty extensive correspondence, received another letter from Mr Thomas Lee, dated Oct. 1, 1764, who was then at Edinburgh. He notices the prosperity of the work of God, particularly in Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen, complains of Scotch prejudices, and mentions his own ill state of health; observing, in reference to the latter, that it was the opinion of many he would not be long an inhabitant of earth, but stating as a kind of set-off against it, that as "sometimes a bad house stands long, so a weak body deceives many." He then encourages her to look to Christ, telling her that there is in Him, "A fulness of the Godhead,—a fulness of justifying grace,—a fulness of grace to implant in the heart,—a fulness of grace to be derived from Him in every time of need,—a fulness of grace to be obtained to purify the heart, and to fill it with the fulness of God,—and a fulness of glory in Him for those who have washed their robes in his blood." This appears to be the outline of one of his sermons; and while it shews the experimental character of his pulpit exercises, it reflects no small honour on his attempt at usefulness in his epistolary communications.

The party feuds that had been raised through Mr. Bryant, now terminated in a division of the Society. Those of the principal members that espoused his cause were Ezra Twigg, John Butler, Miss Turner, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Hall, Mr. Lacey, and Sarah Moore's mother, with several others. Among those who remained with the old body were Mr. John Wilson, Richard Addy, John Rider, Henry Alsop, James Walker, Mrs. Holy, with an equally respectable number of others. Some attempts were made to secure to Mr. Bryant the use of Mulberry-street Chapel, by those of the trustees who were his adherents; but this was found impracticable, and they contemplated the erection of another building, which they accordingly commenced, and which is thus noticed by Hunter: "The chapel in Scotland-street was built, 1764, by Mr. Bryant, one of the persons who received ordination from a bishop of the Greek Church, who was in London in 1760. He preached above thirty years in the chapel. Since his death the place has been occupied by the Methodists of what is called the New Connexion."\* While the building was going on, Mr. Bryant preached in a room engaged for the purpose; and when the weather would admit of it, he preached abroad in different parts of the public streets, and was rendered useful to many. He lodged at the house of old Mrs. Moore, which rendered the situation of her daughter Sarah rather uncomfortable; and from some remarks which she had penned, apparently as hints for further amplification, it should seem that she was occasionally either wavering in her mind which cause to espouse, or designedly trimming between both. Having written to Mr. WESLEY, she received the following letter:—

" *London, December 8, 1764.*

" My dear Sister,

" Your business is, by every possible means, to calm the intemperate spirits on both sides. There has been much ill blood; and many unkind sayings, which had been better let alone. Now, at least, let there be, by

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\* Hist. of Hallamshire, p. 171.

general agreement, an entire cessation of arms. Our God is a God of Peace; and all his children should, with all their might, labour after it. I have heard something of the kind you mention : but not in the same manner you relate it. However, let it die, and be forgotten. I am,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ J. WESLEY.”

## CHAP. XIV.

*Mr. Bryant leaves Sheffield, writes to Sarah Moore—Double-dealing—Scotland-street Chapel—Mr. Wesley visits the town and neighbourhood—Mr. Bryant's return to Sheffield; an account of him—Mr. Mayer's labours, persecutions, and usefulness at Eyam, Castleton, Sheffield, &c.*

1765. Mr. BRYANT, who had resided in Sheffield chiefly since the Conference of 1764, left for London, and was obliged to stop at Shepton Mallet some time, owing to an accident which befel his mare. From thence he wrote to Sarah Moore:—

“*Shepton Mallet, March 8, 1765.*

“Dear Sally,

“I delayed writing, thinking I should be in London before this time; but I have been disappointed: first, by being ill myself; and secondly, as I was going to mount my mare last week for London, I found her so lame, that it was impracticable to proceed with her ten miles. She is now better, and I hope Providence will permit me to set out for London, in a few days: then I will fulfil my promise; write to Mr. Twigg, &c.; but I cannot determine till I get to London. Tell Mr. Twigg the reasons why I am not at London as proposed. Last week I received a letter desiring me to visit London immediately. Mr. WESLEY has not written to me, nor I to him, since I received my discharge. I received a letter from Sheffield, in which I read these words, ‘Sally Moore says, you must come to Sheffield.’ When I write to you from London, I desire you will let me know *all* particulars, and whether you will be of the same mind after Mr. WESLEY has been at Sheffield; for I find he sets out this day from Bristol for Sheffield,



and I suppose he will be with you as soon as this comes to hand.

“What shocking work Rankin makes at Plymouth Dock! The people were vastly taken with W. Darney, and the Lord owned and blessed his word much. But Mr. Rankin, Mr. Oldham, and Mr. Stevens (a Cornish preacher) preached perfection, &c. to such a degree, that the people will not suffer either of them to enter the preaching-house more. Mr. Roberts is gone to Dock, to settle, if possible, the affair, and to prepare the way for Wm. Darney to come into our round. Richard Houghton, one that received ordination with me in London, nearly two years since, left London for debt, fled to Plymouth, and Mr. WESLEY, not knowing the case, suffered him to preach at the Dock: he was well received by the people, with Wm. Darney, but has since been taken up, and is now in Exeter gaol. O what work there is at the Dock! and by what I find, W. Brammah is not much better in the lower part of Cornwall than they are there. The Dock people say they will receive any moderate man, but Rankin, &c. they cannot.\* What a mercy I was kept out of that fire! Surely this is matter of praise. As to Mr. WESLEY, I love him and respect him as a man of God, and my father in the gospel.

“Dear Sally, be patient for a time. Though I am

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\* This “shocking work” is fortunately noticed by Mr. Rankin. After mentioning his colleagues, among whom was Wm. Darney, he says, “Brother Darney had preached for years; he had been eccentric in his manner of labouring in the connection, and Mr. WESLEY, with my brethren, thought I might be able to cure him. For a season he behaved pretty well, and was ready to be advised; but he relapsed into his former conduct, and advanced opinions in public, contrary to the Methodist doctrine and discipline; so that we were obliged to call in a young man to labour in his place, and dismiss him from the circuit, and that by Mr. WESLEY’s express approbation. The greatest hurt he did was in the Society at Plymouth Dock, where he nearly divided the people. My other fellow-labourers were steady, and alive to God, and much blest in their labours. The work of God more or less prospered in every Society in the country. In two or three months hundreds were added to the Societies in the west, and many savingly brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; many backsliders were restored, and a most wonderful change took place in every parish where the gospel was preached. Most of the country villages were like Eden, as the garden of the Lord. It was not uncommon for ten or twenty to find peace with God in one day, or at one sermon, or love-feast, in many places.”—Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 729.

not called a Methodist, yet I am one still, and hope to live and die the same in heart. When my mare is quite well, I shall go, if God permit, immediately to London, and then shall write again to Sheffield for every particular. I believe you will be faithful; and be sure to be close, for that is wisdom in all cases. Tell brother Butler and Mr. Twigg, that the lameness on my mare is only an injury in the heel, of which she will be certain to be better in a week. Request Mr. Twigg to send word by Mr. Hornsfield, or a letter to me, saying what I must do with the mare when I reach London, for I should not wish to dispose of her if I can help it. Possibly I may see you all at Sheffield again; yet the Lord only knows, for I cannot determine. It is likely when I reach London, I shall put on the flag. In the mean time, I rest your loving and affectionate brother, in the bonds of the gospel,

“T. BRYANT.

“P.S. My kind love to your mother, to Lacey, Jonathan, Miss Turner, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Twigg, and all true friends. Do you think it right for them to give up their trust? But let me be a cipher.

“Surely the right-hand of the Lord will bring mighty things to pass. As soon as I hear the words, ‘Loose him, and let him go,’ and struggle to get free, the thorns entangle me again; though nothing keeps me but the mare at present. Pray for me; when I bow my knee before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I offer up my weak petitions for my friends at Sheffield. Adieu for the present.

“My box has been at London nearly a fortnight. I shall see Mr. Hornsfield as soon as possible. I charge you to keep this letter safe to yourself; unless you add Lacey, and Mr. Twigg, &c. Be sure to give my kind love to Tommy Martin and his sister.”

Though this female appears to have wanted decision of character in some instances, for which many allow-

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\* An allusion apparently to the Trustees of Mulberry-street Chapel, who separated with him.

ances might be made, yet it is impossible not to perceive a shade of duplicity in the fact of her bearing tidings to both parties,—a conduct which genuine Christian simplicity would never tolerate; nor is it less apparent, that Mr. Bryant himself was partly a concealed character, as he only purposed to “put on the flag,” and shew himself openly, under certain circumstances. While, however, the latter wished to convert the former into a tool to answer his own purposes of information, by receiving from her “every particular,”—a case on which he would scarcely have dared to presume at present, if he had not had previous encouragement,—it is certain, from his asking her whether she would “be of the same mind after Mr. WESLEY had been at Sheffield,” and from his enjoining secrecy upon her, that he considered himself as having but a doubtful hold of her sincerity and her services. From Mr. WESLEY’s letter, of July 5, it may be fairly inferred, that this female had manifested great solicitude for Mr. Bryant’s continuance in the Sheffield circuit, and in the letter above, the writer had it in his power to state, “Sally Moore says you must come to Sheffield;” so far here is consistency in an adherence to the same person: but in the interim she is holding a communication with Mr. WESLEY, to which he replies, “I have heard something of the kind you mention; but not in the same manner you relate it. However, let it die, and be forgotten.” If a conjecture might be indulged, the circumstance related was something in which Mr. WESLEY was interested, but which, in her relation, had received a higher tone of colouring than when communicated before: and as though Mr. WESLEY himself could scarcely repose confidence in her, and was doubtful whether she was not wanting his opinion on the subject for others as well as herself, he does not in the last letter give her an opinion to retail; but advises her to promote peace, and to bury the past in oblivion; very slender provision for one who had to communicate “*all particulars.*”

From Mr. Bryant’s letter, it may be fairly inferred also, that the date assigned for the erection of Scotland-street Chapel by Mr. Hunter, in his History of Hallamshire, is rather too early. He fixes it in the year prior

to the date of this letter. Mr. Bryant left the Methodist Connexion only in the summer of 1764; he took but a part of the Society away with him—a Society which was so poor as a *whole*, as to be unable to build a new chapel, having been indebted to Mrs. Holy for the loan of money to enable them to enlarge the old one; we can, therefore, scarcely suppose that, when divided, they would attempt an undertaking equal to that of Scotland-street Chapel, till they had acquired considerable additional strength, for the increase of which, and for the completion of the building, there was not sufficient time in a period of about eight months. There are, in addition to this, presumptive proofs of the chapel not having even been commenced at this period, much more of its being finished; for Mr. Bryant left Sheffield with a doubt whether he should return. “Sally Moore says, you must come to Sheffield.” He, however, is so far from satisfying her on this subject, that he replies, “Possibly I may see you all at Sheffield again; yet the Lord only knows, for I cannot determine.” He had packed up previous to his departure, and his “box” reached London a fortnight before himself; and he himself, as will appear from a subsequent letter, was absent nearly three months, promising on his return only to spend a short time in Sheffield. Supposing the chapel to have been built at his own expense, previous to this, it was foreign to his own interest to have deserted his rising cause for such a length of time, and at a period so critical; and, on the admission of it having been erected by his friends, it was opposed to their interest to have suffered him to leave so soon, without any certainty of his return: nor is it likely that either he himself would have felt free to return, or that his friends would have given him their firm support, after having left them to make their best of such an erection. The truth appears to be, that his success in Sheffield was not equal to his expectations; he went to London to improve his circumstances, at which place he purposed to hoist “the flag,” if he succeeded; but being disappointed there again, he returned and took up his residence in Sheffield.



That which Mr. Bryant had heard of Mr. WESLEY's purposed visit to Sheffield was soon realized. "Wednesday, March 20, M. Lewen took me in a post-chaise to Derby," says he, "where the New House was thoroughly filled: and the people behaved in a quite different manner from what they did when I was here last. Thursday 21, we went on, though with much difficulty, being often ready to stick fast, to Sheffield. The house here is full twice as large as it was. And so is the congregation. The little differences which had been for some time among the people, were now easily adjusted. And I left them all, united in love, and resolved to strengthen each other's hands. Saturday 23, we took horse in a furious wind, which was ready to bear us away. About ten I preached in Bradwell, in the High Peak, where, notwithstanding the storm, abundance of people were got together. I had now an opportunity of inquiring concerning Mr. B—y. He did run well; till one offence after another swallowed him up: but he scarcely enjoyed himself after. First, his oldest daughter was snatched away: then his only son: then himself. And only two or three of that large family now remain." \*

When Mr. WESLEY speaks of the chapel being "full twice as large as it was," he refers to the addition of the gallery which would enable it to accommodate double the number of people, though not quite twice the width and length. It is this preaching-house which Mr. Myles confounds with Norfolk-street Chapel, stating Norfolk-street Chapel to have been first built in 1755, and re-built in 1765 †, the periods more properly assigned for the first occupation and enlargement of Mulberry-street house. A remark may also be made on the state of the Society, in connection with what has preceded. Mr. WESLEY observes, "The little differences which had been for some time among the people, were now easily adjusted. And I left them all united in love, &c." But why "easily adjusted now?" Mr. Bryant, the moving cause, was removed. And who were the "people" among whom "the little differences" subsist-

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\* Journals, vol. iv. p. 231.

† Chron. Hist. p. 440.

ed? Not that part of the Society left in possession of Mulberry-street Chapel, to whom he had just preached. These were agreed already—"united in love" before he came—"and resolved to strengthen each other's hands." By the "people," we are unquestionably to understand the parties collectively, between whom alone there were "differences." But now those differences are "adjusted"—they are "united in love"—nay more, they are to labour and dwell together, "resolved to strengthen each other's hands;" another evidence, by the way, that Scotland-street Chapel was not built in 1764, for they would never have abandoned it so soon. Here it may be observed, once for all, that it is not a censorious disposition, a sense of self-sufficiency, or any suspicion of imposition, that occasions the writer of these pages to differ with any who may have preceded him; those writers had no favorite theory to establish any more than himself; they were in quest of fact as well as he; and if he should have been favoured in any instance with documents to which they had no access, the persons who furnished the additional information are those who demand our gratitude. To return to the Society again; the tranquillity of which Mr. WESLEY left the Society in possession, was soon disturbed. Mr. Bryant addressed Sarah Moore by letter, signifying his intention to visit Sheffield.

" *London, May 18, 1765,*

" *Dear Sally, Saturday night, nine o'clock.*

" I have sold my mare, and have this hour taken a place in the Sheffield machine.\* Note, I shall travel on the outside for cheapness and pleasure, and shall leave London at twelve o'clock on Monday night. On Wednesday, we shall pass through Nottingham, I suppose, and shall breakfast at Mansfield; on which day I hope to dine at Sheffield, where you will hear particulars at the inn. I shall be quite glad to be met by my friends,

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\* These machines are frequently noticed in Mr. WESLEY's Journals, vol. iii. p. 179, 180, 262, &c. There is something ponderous in the term, and which prevents us from associating with it the comfort and rapidity of a modernly-constructed stage-coach.

as many as you please. To-morrow I read prayers, preach twice, and give the sacrament once. My kind love to all in Jesus. I am your's in Christ,

“ T. S. BRYANT.

“ P.S. I beg you will not blast it among the Methodists, but let me come secretly and in peace, for I shall stay only a month or six weeks. Adieu.”

No sooner did Mr. Bryant make his appearance, than former professions of friendship and attachment were renewed, and nearly one half of the Society united themselves to him. Absence seemed to heighten the value they set upon him—subscriptions were entered into to erect the chapel in Scotland-street—a room was engaged in the interim—and street-preaching was resorted to. When he entered upon the building in Scotland-street, which was afterwards given to him, he established classes, love-feasts, and administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper. He took up his residence, as formerly, with old Mrs. Moore.

It is but just to state, that Mr. Bryant was rendered very useful during the former part of his ministry in Sheffield; but he lost by degrees the spirit of his work, and long before his death, it might be said, “ The glory is departed.” He drank too deeply into the spirit of the division, and not satisfied with such as voluntarily united themselves to him from other bodies, or by gathering sinners out of the world, he employed several artifices to induce the members of the Mulberry-street Society to forsake the fold in which they had been brought up. To Richard Addy he once said, “ Richard, you were brought to God under my ministry; I claim you as the fruit of it. Do you never think, now that I am separated from the Methodists, that it is your duty to unite with me?” Richard replied, “ Sir, I acknowledge you as my spiritual father; but when I was convinced under you, you were then a Methodist; I was brought into a connexion with the body through you, and I intend to abide wherein I am called. If you have changed your coat, it is no reason I should change mine.” It might have been endured, if he had proceed-

ed no further. But he too often took his own spirit into the pulpit, and dealt in invective and personalities. James Hawksworth and some more of the Mulberry-street members went to hear him, after he had resided in Sheffield a few years. Perceiving them in the chapel, he embraced an opportunity of wandering from his subject into the doctrine of Christian Perfection, and with a sarcastic sneer, exclaimed, "Perfect, perfect devils!" On meeting James Hawksworth a day or two after, he was as solicitous as modesty would permit to know his opinion of the sermon. "Well," replied James, "you will procure a little bread and some clothes in this world, and will perhaps lose your soul at last." This was unexpected, and Mr. Bryant, somewhat affected, said, "I am sometimes afraid of that myself," and withdrew. These two anecdotes were related to the Rev. Joseph Taylor, who travelled on the Sheffield circuit, by the persons themselves, from whom the writer had them. Poor Bryant was miserable in spirit long before his death, and seemed to be kept alive by suffering; like the tree which continues to stand long after age has eaten away its core, the sap still circulating through its withered rind, by which it is enabled to live on, in the midst of youth and verdure, a melancholy spectacle of mockery and decay. And fatal indeed is the blast of misery, when it has forced its way into the soul of a man once exalted in office and high in grace. It may be compared to the storm, which has burst in the port-holes of a thick-ribbed vessel, when, in a moment, all its gloomy apartments are roaring like a hundred cataracts. But there is an air which memory is not permitted to breathe. Happy, happy indeed, if his misery led to genuine contrition of heart! and equally so, if his example prove a warning to others.

During the agitated state of the Society, several eminently useful persons in other parts of the connexion visited Sheffield, and supported the hands of those who worshipped in Mulberry-street. It was about this time, that the late Mr. Matthew Mayer, of Portwood-hall, near Stockport, came into this town and neighbourhood,



of whose labours, persecutions, and success, the following extracts from his memoir will furnish an idea:—

“ In 1765, after preaching at Banmoor at noon, and at Bradwell at night, some friends who had heard him at both places, invited him to go to preach at Eyam. No Methodist preacher had yet ventured to go to this place \*; the common people were chiefly employed in the lead mines, and were a most savage race.† Our

\* It had been visited in 1761; and preaching had probably been withdrawn.

† It is astonishing how soon (and what can be a stronger proof of the radical depravity of human nature?) a people will sink into a state of mental and moral degradation, after an enlightened ministry is withdrawn. Not a century had rolled over the village since the warning voice of the pious and faithful Mompesson had been heard in it, the fruit of whose ministry must have continued some time after he had ceased to be an inhabitant of this world; and not a century had elapsed since the destroying Angel stood over it in all the terrible array of the *Plague*: but the recollection of the one, and the voices from “*The Field of Graves*” of the other, were insufficient to prevent the villagers from relapsing into a state of rudeness, or to tame their savage ferocity. Though few local visitations were more frequently the theme of conversation than the *Plague*, yet they were heedless of their own dissolution. They each could say,

“ Beneath my feet, how great a sum  
Of human misery lies dumb!  
The carnival of death,  
Within our village, once was held,  
Long, fierce, unvanquish’d, and unquell’d:—  
With poisonous breath  
His minister of vengeance came;  
Not whirlwind, famine, sword, or flame,  
But that most dreadful, deathful, vague,  
Untamed, soul-sickening monster, *Plague*!  
He came with recent carnage drunk,  
With gloating eyes, and visage sunk,  
From where he, on his mission last,  
The Lord’s destroying angel, pass’d,  
And in the havoc of his strife  
Made such a waste and wreck of life,  
As might have grieved the unpitied moon,  
Or sicken’d e’en the sun at noon:  
He came, while yet the urns of Thames  
Had scarcely quench’d Augusta’s flames;  
Where ruin with a ghastly smile  
Lean’d o’er each half-extinguish’d pile,—  
A smouldering tombstone on the breast  
Of the last victim of the pest.  
O’er hills and vales of gold and green,  
He pass’d, undreaded and unseen:  
Foregoing cities, towns, and crowds;  
Gay mansions glittering to the clouds,  
Magnificence and wealth,  
To reach a humbler, sweeter spot,  
The village and the peaceful cot,  
The residence of health.

\* \* \* \*

preacher, however, did not hesitate, but fixed an early day; preached as usual at Banmoor at noon, and taking with him all the force he could muster, proceeded to Eyam. They found a multitude of people come together from different motives. The preacher took his stand in West-street, by the side of a barn. There was one man, a ring-leader of the mob, who had *sworn* to his companions that he would pull the preacher down. His appearance soon caught the preacher's eye, who fixing *his* steadfastly upon him, addressed the people, telling them his design in coming, and entreating a patient hearing. This man was so struck, that he stood immoveable during the whole sermon, and he confessed

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But youth, and infancy, and age  
 In vain the ruthless foe engage;  
 And health and strength in vain  
 Awhile withstood to feel at last,  
 When earthly hope and help were past,  
 Extremes of fiercer pain.  
 And now their register of woe  
 Lies written in the dust below;  
 The charnel's secrets none may read,  
 Or o'er the volume of distress,  
 That mass of perish'd wretchedness,  
 The very heart might bleed;  
 And could a mutter'd spell restore  
 These buried forms to life once more,  
 And bid them stand, array'd afresh  
 In the same muscles, skin, and flesh,  
 With which their living bodies stood,  
 An hour, before the curdling blood  
 Grew stagnant at the heart;  
 Such sight the stoutest would appal;  
 At this the loftiest crest would fall,  
 The firmest nerves would start!  
 Had I the wealth of either Ind,  
 And could that precious bribe rescind  
 The mandate of my fate,  
 And add an hour, I would not stand  
 An hour amid that ghastly band;  
 I could not bear such sight to see:—  
 Yet ah! 'tis unreveal'd to me  
 In heaven's eternal care,  
 Both *when* and *how* my death may be,  
 And *what* this breast can bear."

The above extract is made from a poem, entitled "The Village of Eyam, in four parts; containing, 1. The Village in the Peak; 2. The Reign of the Plague; 3. Cucklet Church; 4. The Field of Graves. By John Holland." It was first published in the *Sheffield Iris*, for 1821, and afterwards in a separate form at Macclesfield. When it is known, that the writer of this History first suggested the subject to Mr. Holland, and that at his request the poem was undertaken, he will be pardoned for expressing a degree of interest in its success, and in being thus particular.

afterwards that he had not power to stir hand or foot. The preacher gave out, at the close of the meeting, that he would come again that day fortnight. The few that had some concern for their souls met frequently during this interval, to pray together, and to strengthen each other's hands in their new pursuits. The mob, in the mean time, endeavoured to harden each other, and to increase their forces; so that when the preacher came again with his friends at the time appointed, the mob was far more numerous than before, and seemed determined on mischief. The preacher, on this occasion, chose the inside of the barn, which was presently filled with those who wished to hear; so that the mob was not able to enter, and could only disturb by their noise on the outside. Their attempts, however, were vain: for the power of the Lord was present to 'wound and to heal, to kill and make alive.'

"After preaching, such persons as were desirous of meeting together, to seek the Lord for the salvation of their souls, were desired to retire into an adjoining house, when twenty-three persons, most of whom had been awakened under these two sermons, were formed into a small society: and of these, eighteen professed to have found peace with God; so wonderfully had God wrought upon the hearts of this people in these two weeks. The following Sunday, Mr. John Allen attempted to preach there, but it being the time of the wakes, the mob, which was very outrageous, broke the windows of the house; and the preacher narrowly escaped being lamed by the stones that were thrown in. Mr. Allen and his friends applied to a magistrate, but could get no redress. Our preacher returned again at the appointed fortnight's end, accompanied by his former friends. The house was filled with those who came to hear: the mob surrounded the house, made several attempts to get inside, but could not; nor were they able to interrupt the preacher by their noise without. Encouraged, however, by their last Sabbath's attack, when preaching was over, they seemed like lions or tigers let loose. As the congregation dispersed, they were pelted with dirt and mud along the streets. A sufficient guard was left behind to watch for the preacher, whose lodg-

ings were in another part of the town. After waiting a considerable time, expecting them to disperse, the preacher, and two young men \*, who staid to accompany him, ventured among them, and boldly told them, what would be the consequences to themselves if they dared to assault them. No sooner had the preacher and his friends turned their backs, than the mob followed, pelting them with mud, filth, stones, and brick-bats; but happily they escaped unhurt. Next morning it was resolved, if possible, to punish some of the ring-leaders: but the difficulty was to find a magistrate who would do his duty. At length they concluded to go to a magistrate at Stoke, who was an old clergyman, and rarely acted in his magisterial capacity. When requested to grant summonses for several of the principal disturbers, he hesitated, and desired a private interview with Mr. Mayer. They retired together, and entered into a long conversation, which afforded the preacher a favourable opportunity of explaining his sentiments, the doctrines he preached, and his reasons for coming among these people. The result of the conversation seems to have been satisfactory to him; for the magistrate concluded it by saying, 'Mr. Mayer, I have no doubt you are called to preach, but I advise you to get ordained, and go into the church.' The preacher thanked him for his advice, but replied, 'My call is to preach the gospel, without money or price, to the poor.' He then granted the summonses: the offenders were brought before him, and finding it impossible to evade the punishment of the law, they expressed great contrition, and promised they would no more either disturb the preacher or congregation: having been bound in recognizances for their good behaviour in future, they were discharged. Thus ended the opposition of the mob; but Satan threatened with another scheme, which succeeded far better. The landlord of the house where preaching had been, discharged his tenant on that account: and the clergyman of the parish went round among the people, and prevail-

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\* These two young men were the late Mr. Philip Sheldon, of Eyam, father of Mrs. Thomas Fentom, now of Eyam, and the late Mr. John Sheldon, a class-leader at Thorncliffe, who died happy in God, in 1821.



ed upon as many as he could, to sign an agreement, not to hear the Methodists any more.\* Preaching was, therefore, suspended here for many years; and the deceased went from hence to Grindleford-bridge, about two miles distant; where he was received by his very respectable friend Mr. Moore, under whose protection preaching was continued, and the friends of Eyam and Stoney Middleton regularly attended at this place, till they regained the privilege in their own towns.

“After preaching at Bradwell one Sunday evening, several persons from Castleton solicited him to preach there on the following morning. He agreed: and went at the time appointed, with his old and much respected friend Mr. Benjamin Barber. These persons had provided a large house, and great numbers were assembled to hear the word. In a little while there came up a number of men shouting, and beating a drum, &c. &c. They thought to disturb the people with their noise, but could not get into the house, which was completely filled with hearers. Finding they could not stop the preacher, they contrived to close the doors, and blew in assafoetida through the key-hole: this incommoded the people more than it did the preacher, who still went on with his discourse. After preaching, the people were permitted to disperse quietly, and the preacher and his friends to retire to the house of Mrs. Slack, to take some refreshment. Here the mob re-assembled, and forced their way into the house, making great noises, beating a drum, &c. Mrs. Slack was advised to go to them, and request them to withdraw, and to tell them if they did not, she would burst their drum. They disregarded her; and she boldly struck a large knife into the drum head, which put an end to their music, and caused them to withdraw out of the house. They were still bent on mischief, and contrived to get upon the house, and to throw a cow's entrails down the chimney of the parlour, where the party were sitting. After waiting a considerable time, the preacher and his friends ventured out

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\* The date of this event should be placed a little later, for the clergyman referred to, was poor Cunningham the poet, author of “*Naval Triumph*,” “*Chatsworth*,” and “*The Russian Prophecy*.”

among them, and walked through the midst of them; but no sooner were they got fairly out on the road, than the mob commenced a furious attack, pelting them with dirt, dung, stones, or any thing they could pick up, so that they were soon covered over with filth; and finding their lives in imminent danger, they turned round upon them, and the preacher having faced them, pointed out what would be the certain consequence of thus assaulting them on the high road. They cried out, 'We have done the preacher pretty well, let us now at Benjamin.' Instantly he was covered with a shower of stones, one of which gave him a severe wound in his back, and caused the blood to flow copiously. Seeing this, some began to be alarmed, lest he might be mortally wounded, and they might be found guilty of murder; they therefore desisted, and suffered the preacher and his friend to escape without further injury. The following awful occurrence struck terror into this mob, being interpreted a judgment from heaven. The ring-leaders on this occasion were three of the servants of — B——, Esq. and the person who beat the drum was his groom. This man broke in his master's young horses, and two days afterwards, having to train one of them to the use of fire-arms, he put a loaded pistol into his pocket, which by some unknown accident went off in the stable, and killed him on the spot."

The writer proceeds: Mr. Mayer "being on a visit for a few days at Congleton, a person who was there from Sheffield, strongly pressed him to come over and see them. Being unacquainted with any one there, he declined at first, but afterwards consented to go over, and fixed a time. He preached at Banmoor on the Sunday, and arrived at Sheffield to preach on the Monday evening. Preaching having been given out for a stranger, the congregation was large. He was received under the hospitable roof of Mrs. Holy, for several days: an intimate friendship from this time commenced with this respectable family, to the younger branches of which our preacher was made very useful; and he visited them regularly twice in the year, for many years afterwards."\*

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\* Meth. Mem. 1816, pp. 162-166.

## CHAP. XV.

*Doncaster—High Green given up—The powerful effects of the gospel—Chapel Town visited—Profanation of the Sabbath—Minutes of Conference corrected—Peter Jaco and Paul Greenwood—Disturbances at Mulberry-street preaching-house—Mr. Wesley preaches—Death of a religious mocker—Mr. Whitfield visits Sheffield—Thomas Holy, Esq.—An Address to the Methodists—Robert Roberts and Joseph Guilford—Mr. Wesley preaches at Rotherham—Sudden death of a good woman.*

1765. PREACHING having been established in Doncaster a short time, it was natural for the more active members of Society to endeavour to extend the benefits of the gospel to their ignorant fellow-creatures in the neighbouring villages and hamlets. This, however, was not effected without some opposition; and, as in other instances, the rostrum was converted into a battery, from whence several pieces of abuse were fired off against the Methodists. "Being at Cantley, near Doncaster," says Wm. Green, "in June last, Rob. Briggs informed me that the priest had been fighting the Methodists in the pulpit, calling them false prophets, and saying, that they crept into houses, leading captive silly women laden with their sins, &c., which pleased many of his hearers, taking it for granted that he had done for the Methodists. Upon this, I wrote the following lines, desiring him to fix them on the church doors, 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' Matt. vii. 15. Do you inquire how we are to know them? Answer; Our Saviour saith, 'By their fruits,' ver. 16. And what can these 'fruits' be, but, first, their bad doctrine, and, secondly, their bad lives? They are not false prophets, but true ones, that convert sinners. In reference to the former, the Lord saith, 'I have not sent these prophets,

yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied' (or preached.) And in ver. 32, he declares, 'Therefore they shall not profit this people at all.' It is to these—persons who are false in their doctrines and immoral in their lives, that St. Paul refers, in the 3d chap. of his 2d Epistle to Timothy, where he declares them to be 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.' 1st Thess. v. 21."

Though progress could be reported, in the midst of opposition, both in Doncaster and in the neighbourhood, it was not so in every case. High Green, which had been visited by Mr. Grimshaw, by Mr. Edwards\*, of Leeds, John Thorpe, Wm. Green, Joseph Rose, and others, was now abandoned, for reasons assigned in Chap. V. Great labour had been bestowed upon this place; no care, no cultivation had been wanting; but, alas, like the unfruitful tree, upon whose form the sun has shed his benign influence, and whose roots have been moistened with the rains and dews of heaven, a considerable portion of the labour had been in vain, and the axe and the fire were likely to be its destiny. It had been one of John Thorpe's favourite places before he left the Methodist body, at which he regularly preached every Sunday morning at eight o'clock, and often on the Saturday evening. From thence the preachers proceeded to Ecclesfield, where they preached at one o'clock at noon: other places were supplied in the evening with a sermon. Prior to the abandonment of High Green, a circumstance occurred, which, though beneficial in its effects, was rather ludicrous in its nature. A person of the name of Reuben Batty lived there, whose wife was a violent persecutor. This female entered the congregation, as she had frequently done before, and ordered her husband home. Reuben took hold of her in great good nature, and being an athletic

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\* Mr. Edwards was a native of Ireland. He entered the itinerant life in the year 1747; but having embraced the Calvinist doctrines, he left the Methodist connexion, and settled at Leeds in 1753 or 1755, where he gathered a large congregation, who erected for him a commodious chapel. His ministerial abilities were of a superior cast; he was extensively useful, and universally respected; he died in great peace, and deeply lamented by his flock, in 1784.



man, held her before the preacher till he finished his discourse. The word made an impression upon her heart, she changed her line of conduct, and thankfully acknowledged to John Cooper, of Charton Brook, some time afterwards, that she viewed religion very differently from what she was formerly led to view it.

Potter-hill and Ecclesfield were still visited; and some attempts were made to introduce preaching into Chapeltown. A person still living, heard Wm. Green preach at the latter place, in a small house, in the course of this year. His text was, "Ye must be born again."

It appears to have been the general practice of the male population at this period, in the parish of Ecclesfield, to attend Divine service on the Sabbath-day afternoon, when the more profligate part of them availed themselves of the opportunity of retiring to an adjacent public-house, after the congregation was dismissed, for the purpose of concluding the day with rioting and drunkenness. James Bailey, of Potter-hill, now a member of the New Connexion, was rather late on one of these occasions, and found the house so full of company on his arrival, that he was obliged to take his station out of doors. He contrived, however, to secure such a situation as would admit of a pretty fair view of what was passing; and so much was he shocked with this profanation of the Christian Sabbath, that he was resolved never more to enter the place. He soon joined the Methodist Society at Potter-hill; and was in the habit of going, with his brother, sisters, and other friends, to Thorp, Greasbro', and the Holmes, near Rotherham, on the same day, to hear preaching.

The Conference was held at Manchester this year, and for the first time the stations of the preachers were printed.\* The preachers for Sheffield were Peter Jaco

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\* This Conference was held August 30, according to the printed Minutes, vol. i., p. 46; and according to Mr. Wesley in his Journals vol. iv., p. 256, it commenced August 20th, and terminated on the 23d. In such a case, it was an easy matter for the printer to insert the 3 instead of the 2. But there are other important corrections and additions which might be made in a future edition of the early Minutes, and the following remarks may shew the propriety and possibility of such improvement.

Mr. Wesley observes, "Monday 15th, (June, 1747,) our Conference

and Paul Greenwood. Epworth and Leeds had now no connexion with Sheffield as a circuit. The two men who were now stationed here, were eminent for piety and usefulness, and well calculated to allay the feverish

began, and ended on Saturday 20th. The Minutes of all that passed therein, were, some time after, transcribed and published." Journals, vol. ii., p. 394. In an old well-written *manuscript* of the late John Nelson's, furnished to the writer by his grandson, several particulars are noticed, which are not to be found in the printed Minutes. The regular discussions of the *first four days* of the Conference of 1747 are distinctly marked, which is not the case in the printed Minutes: nor are many of the subjects in the printed copy inserted in the regular order, as to *time*, while the names of persons present at the discussions are omitted. Of this the editor was aware, and hence, in a note on the discussions of the Conference of 1744, he remarks,—“Some of the following rules and regulations, which we find placed under this date, and that of June 29th, seem evidently to have been made in some future Conferences, although all previous to the year 1763, in which year that extract of the Minutes was published, from which we copy them.” Minutes, vol. i., p. 9, Oct. Edit. In the Minutes of 1744, are to be found the discussions of 1747, according to the old MS. Had the editor been favoured with the MS., he would undoubtedly have availed himself of its contents; but he was not thus favoured, and has to complain,—“The great chasm in the annual Minutes which occurs here (from 1749 to 1765) may be accounted for by considering, that the doctrines and principal parts of discipline of the Methodists being agreed upon, Mr. Wesley, it appears, discontinued publishing the Minutes annually till 1765: at least, if any were published, we cannot find that a single copy of them is extant.” Minutes, vol. i., p. 46. The small copy, printed in London, 1763, which now lies before the writer, and from which the octavo edition professes to be taken, omits the Minutes, as to *date*, both of 1747 and 1748, and commences the Conference of May 24, 1746, with the question, “How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and called of God to preach?” p. 18; thus leaving out a number of other questions stated in the *octavo* edition to have been discussed at the time. Vol. i., pp. 25 to 29. Besides this, there is a clashing in point of dates. The *small* edition states the Conference to have commenced May 24, 1746, without naming the *place*, which, according to Mr. Wesley's Journal, vol. ii., p. 342, was on a *Saturday*, a very unlikely day for such a meeting, at which time Mr. Wesley was in *London*; whereas, in the large edition, it is stated to have commenced May 13th; and though Mr. Wesley was at *Bristol*, in which place the same edition states the Conference to have been held, yet we find him leaving Bristol in the course of a day or two, and preaching at Bath, &c., when the early Conferences generally lasted about a *week*. Now, what speaks more for the correctness of the *small* edition of 1763, is, that it was printed under the superintendence of Mr. Wesley himself, who must have been aided by his Journals in reference to date: and though *Saturday* was not at all a likely day to begin a Conference, yet from the 24th to the 30th of May, forms nearly a blank in Mr. Wesley's Journals, during most of which period the Conference was probably held. No Conference, it is true, is noticed in the Journals of that period in *London*; but that silence must operate as powerfully against its being held in *Bristol* at the time specified, seeing that it is there equally maintained.

Where there are acknowledged difficulties and conflicting statements, it is pleasing to see them surmounted and corrected. In the large edition, the Conference of 1747 begins on the *Tuesday*, without any notice of the previous day, which, according to the quotation from

beats which had been occasioned by Mr. Bryant's division. Peter Jaco was born at Newlyn, near Penzance, in Cornwall, in 1729. He was one of the first race of Methodist preachers; and few names, with the excep-

Mr. Wesley's Journal, vol. ii., p. 394, commenced on the *Monday*. Agreeably to the period fixed by Mr. Wesley, the old MS. reads,—

"MONDAY, June the 15th, 1747,

"The following persons being met at the Foundry, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Westley Hall, and Charles Manning, it was inquired,

"Quest. 1. Which of our brethren shall we invite, to be present at this Conference?

"Ans. John Jones, Thomas Maxfield, Jon. Reeves, John Nelson, John Bennet, John Downes, Thomas Crouch, Robert Swindels, and John Maddern: who were accordingly brought in." These are names unnoticed in the printed Minutes, as present on the occasion. When they were introduced, the question was then proposed,

"Quest. 2. How may the time of this Conference be made more eminently a time of prayer, watching, and self-denial?" Which question is also proposed in the Minutes for 1744, receiving an answer including three particulars. See Minutes vol. i., pp. 3, 4: see also small edit. of 1763, p. 2. The same answer is given in the MS., but its date of proposal is 1747.

"Quest. 3. Should we at every Conference read over all the Conferences we have had from the beginning?

"Ans. Only that immediately preceding; and so much of the rest as we may find needful from time to time.

"Quest. 4. In our first Conference it was agreed to examine every point from the foundation. Have we not been somewhat fearful of doing this? What were we afraid of?—of overturning our first principles?

"Ans. Whoever was afraid of this, it was a vain fear." Then follows in the MS. the remainder of the answer, as in the Minutes of 1744, vol. i., p. 4; small edit. p. 2.

Questions 5 and 6 are the same, with their answers, as in the Minutes of 1744, vol. i., p. 4; small edit. p. 2. The questions refer to the extent in which one person may submit to the judgment of another.

"Quest. 7. Shall each of us read over all the tracts which have been published, before our next Conference? And write down every passage we do not approve, or do not fully understand?

"Ans. Every one answered in order, 'I will endeavour so to do.'"

The above comprises part of the business of the *Monday*; and it is in reference to *this* Conference, that Mr. Wesley says, "The Minutes of all that passed therein, were, some time after, transcribed and published;" but according to the old MS., only *part* has reached us, and portions even of that are assigned to other *periods*. The discussions of Friday and Saturday are not distinctly noticed in the MS. The whole of the conversations assigned to Wednesday, June 17, 1748, in the collected edition of the Minutes, vol. i., p. 35, are said to have taken place, in the MS. copy, on Wednesday, June 17, 1747: and that these conversations ought not to be assigned to 1748, according to the printed copy referred to, appears pretty evident from hence,—that Mr. Wesley is silent in respect to any Conference in June 1748. See Journals, vol. ii., p. 442, where he is engaged, not in *Conferences*, but in *preaching and travelling*. It will be found also, in the same page, that the *Wednesday* in June, 1748, was on the *fifteenth*, and not on the *seventeenth*. From the manner, indeed, in which No. 5 follows No. 4, in Minutes, vol. i., pp. 32 and 35, without specifying the *year* after "*Wednesday, June 17th,*" p. 35, as in other cases, and from the conversations being the same as those which took place on the *Wednesday* in the MS., in the same

tion of Messrs. WESLEY and Whitfield, are more frequently noticed in the lives and experience of the preachers and the people, in early Methodism, as having been useful to them, than that of Mr. Jacob's. He is mentioned with great respect in a letter of Mr. Walter Shirley's to Mr. WESLEY.\* His life is to be found in the first volume of the Methodist Magazine. So early as 1754, the period assigned for the commencement of his itinerant life, we find him in Yorkshire.† Various were the hardships he underwent. "In some places," says he, "the work was to begin; and in most places, being in its infancy, we had hardly the necessaries of life: so that after preaching three or four times a day, and riding thirty or forty miles, I have often been thankful for a little clean straw, with a canvass sheet to lie on."‡ He was obliged to desist from travelling some years before his death, through physical indisposition. His end was peace. He died at Margate, in Kent, July 6, 1781, and was interred in the New Chapel burying-ground, City-road, London. Paul Greenwood, the other preacher, began his ministerial labours in 1747. He was well known in Rossendale, in Lancashire, by the appellation of Mr. Grimshaw's *man*;§ and was on terms of intimacy with Mr. G., from whom he received advice. "Paul Greenwood," says John Olivers, "was a man of a truly excellent temper, and exemplary behaviour. He was constantly serious, but not sad; he

month, it should seem that the evidence is in favour of the MS., and that there must be some mistake, in making No. 5 a *separate Minute* for a *separate year*. The words in the MS. are *verbatim* with those in the large edit. for Wednesday, June 17, 1748.

Page 1 of the MANUSCRIPT commences with Monday, and to p. 5, part is omitted in the printed Minutes.—Pages 5 to p. 13, embrace the matter which is printed in the Tuesday of the large edition.—Pages 13 to p. 28 are in the Wednesday of the large edition.—At the close of p. 28, the subject of "*Discipline*" is introduced, and is carried on to p. 34, containing matter that is not in the printed Minutes.—Page 35 commences a new subject, and goes on to p. 41, with matter not in the printed Minutes; then p. 43 again to the end.

This MS. might be rendered useful in the case of a *second* edition of the Minutes of Conference. Had it not been for the *locality* of the present history, the discrepancies should have been distinctly marked, the omissions printed in full, and the dates of the several Minutes, as far as they could be ascertained, specified; and yet, thanks will perhaps scarcely be awarded for what has been done!

\* Meth. Mag. 1797, p. 408. † Ibid. for 1778, p. 544. ‡ Ibid.  
§ Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 17, 29.



was always cheerful, but not light. And the people drank into the same spirit.”\* He died in the month of March, 1767, about seven months after he left this circuit. “He was taken ill,” says Mr. Pawson, “of a very bad fever at Warrington: and notwithstanding he was delirious most of the time of his sickness, yet all his conversation was spiritual and heavenly. The first time the gentleman, at whose house he lodged, perceived that he was in a delirium, was upon asking Mr. Greenwood how he did; he answered, ‘They tell me that the heavens and the earth are fled away, and there is no more place found for them.’ Mr. Gaskill replied, ‘Well, if they are, we shall have new heavens and a new earth, you know.’ ‘That is true,’ said Mr. Greenwood, and was out of bed in a moment. When he got to the window, he observed, ‘The Lord hath spared this corner where we live; what a mercy that is!’ The last night of his life, he preached and prayed the whole time, till day-light appeared in the morning. He then said, ‘Another sun shall arise; Christ the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings;’ and immediately fell asleep in the Lord. It is something remarkable, that his aged mother, a most excellent Christian, died happy in the love of God, at Keighley in Yorkshire, the same morning. What a joyful surprise, when those two kindred spirits met together at the gates of heaven!”\*

1766. These two good men laboured in love with each other and with the people, while on the circuit; but not without much opposition from several young men, from sixteen to twenty years of age, at the head of whom was a person whose name need not be recorded. Through the whole of the winter, Mulberry-street Chapel was beset, within and without, by these disorderly ruffians, who were encouraged by their buffoon-general. The cloaks and gowns of females were frequently cut in pieces with knives and scissors; at other times, the chief entered the chapel in harlequin attire, with a cat or a fowl concealed under his clothes, which, by torturing, continued to mew or chuckle to the great annoyance of both preacher and people; keeping up the

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\* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 426.

† Ibid. for 1795, p. 148.

laughter of his companions at the same time, by every species of grimace and buffoonery. When expelled from the interior of the building, he contrived to scale the roof, where, in front of a large sky-light, nearly over the pulpit, he attempted to mimic the preacher. Unable to practise this as often as he wished, and irritated with the repeated checks which were received, he, and his associates, assailed the windows; and such was the violence employed, that the friends were driven to the necessity of having shutters for the windows, both above and below, the impressions of the hinges of which are still visible in the window-frames of the old building. This being done, they were still annoyed, with the noise of bricks, stones, sticks, and other instruments playing against the wood.

It is to these disorders Mr. WESLEY refers, in his visit to Sheffield, in March, 1766. On his route thither, he says, "Monday, 24, We rode to Derby. I never saw this house full before, the people in general being profoundly careless. I endeavoured to shew them their picture, by enlarging on these words, 'Gallio cared for none of these things.' Tuesday, 25, at ten, I preached in their new house at Creitch, about twelve miles from Derby, to a loving, simple-hearted people, many of whom felt what I spoke of 'fellowship with the Father and with the Son.' Thence we rode on through several heavy showers of snow to Sheffield, where, at six, we had a numerous congregation. There has been much disturbance here this winter. But all was peace to-night. Thursday, 27, I preached in the morning at a little village, near Eyam, in the High Peak. The eagerness with which the poor people devoured the word, made me amends for the cold ride over the snowy mountains."\*

Tranquil as the evening was when Mr. WESLEY preached, it was only one of those sudden calms which the experienced mariner is led to contemplate as the sure presage of an approaching storm. The tempest again burst forth, and raged with but few intervals of repose till the middle of summer, when an awful Provi-

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\* Journals, vol. iv. p. 269.

dence terminated it for a period. During the races at Sheffield, the riot-leader, who was an expert swimmer, and had acquired considerable celebrity as a diver, went with several of his associates to the Don, in order to bathe. After he had dived several times across the river, at a place called the Butts, he elevated himself on a large post which stood by the edge of the water, and with an air of triumph mingled with mirth, exclaimed, "Another dip, and then for a bit more sport with the Methodists!" He threw himself off his point of elevation; but it was his last dip! It is supposed that he was either stunned by the violence of the fall, or that going head foremost, he sunk among the mud and was unable to disengage himself. However that might be, it was some time before he was found, and when brought out, too late for all attempts at resuscitation. Mr. Benjamin Wilkinson, who has been a member of the Methodist Society upwards of half a century, was present when the man employed the above language, and saw him take the fatal leap. "The Methodists," said the opposers of the truth, as if aware that the catastrophe would admit of an unfavourable inference, and as if determined to blunt its edge by being beforehand with them, "the Methodists will say this is a judgment." Any inference of the Methodists, after this, had been unnecessary; and they left the unfortunate sufferer, as they are disposed to leave every other persecutor, with the Judge of all the earth, who will do right.

It was at the time of the races\*, that Mr. Whitfield visited Sheffield for the last time. He preached in Mulberry-street Chapel, at five o'clock in the morning, on "So run that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. ix. 24. He intended to have gone to see Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats, at whose house he had lodged, and in whose orchard he had preached in years past, but was prevented by Mr. Edward Bennet, who, in consideration of his great indisposition at the time, was persuaded that the fatigue would be too much for him.

The Society in Sheffield, like the temple which was

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\* Hunter traces this amusement no further back than 1713, and ascribes its death-blow to the Inclosure Bill. *Hist. of Hallam.*, p. 196.

built in "troublous times," continued to add to its members; and one who joined it at this time was the present Thomas Holy, Esq. He was born in the year 1752, and had just returned from Northampton, where he had been receiving his education at the school of Mr. Ryland, father of Dr. Ryland, now of Bristol. The Doctor was then a boy in the same class, and sate next T. Holy at school. Since that time, the Doctor has always recollected with feelings of pleasure his old school-fellow; and a few years back, when the Baptist Academy at Bristol was involved in pecuniary difficulties, he wrote to Mr. Holy, soliciting his aid and his influence in its behalf. After contributing liberally himself, Mr. Holy collected from Mr. Walker, of Rotherham, and others, several sums of ten pounds each, and forwarded the whole to his early school associate, who gratefully acknowledged the benefaction. Mr. Holy entered the class of the late James Walker, of whom he always entertained the highest opinion, and whose class then met at the foot of what is now called Paradise-square. He met with much opposition from those that are "without;" but was greatly encouraged by his pious mother, the delight of whose soul it was to see her child united to that body of professing Christians whom she herself had chosen as the people of God.

Several attempts have been made by the members of the Establishment, to shew the Methodists their errors by the circulation of a small tract, entitled, "An Earnest and Affectionate Address to the People called Methodists," published under the patronage of "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." This tract was circulated in the neighbourhood at this period, and among others, Wm. Green, of Rotherham, had one put into his hand. It appears from the fragment of a MS. which still survives, that William had contemplated a reply to the "Address;" but how far he proceeded in the prosecution of his design, there are now no means of ascertaining: \* nor is it known what number of pro-

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\* While the writer of this History travelled in the Barnsley Circuit, in 1812, the Rev. Edmund Paley, curate of Cawthorne, a relation of the late Dr. Paley's, endeavoured to enlighten his parishioners on the absurdities of Methodism, by the distribution of this "Address," when the



selytes it made. There was another work, however, of which something is known. Mr. WESLEY's Notes on the Old Testament, for which there were several subscribers in the town and neighbourhood, was now publishing in parts, four parts delivered at a time, at 6s. per part.

The time at length arrived for a change of preachers, and Robert Roberts and Joseph Guilford were appointed for the Sheffield circuit, at the Conference held at Leeds, August 12.\* This is the first year of publishing the number of members in each circuit, and the separate sums of money granted to the different places, which experienced temporal embarrassment. The number of members in the Sheffield circuit, embracing at least what is now comprised in the Doncaster, Worksop, Redford, Mansfield, Chesterfield, Bakewell, Bradwell, Barnsley, and Rotherham circuits, only stood at 583. Sheffield received £5, Rotherham £10, and Derby £20, from the Conference, to aid them under some pecuniary difficulties.†

Mr. Roberts, who succeeded Mr. Jaco as superintendent, was born at Upton, near Chester, in 1731. He entered the work of the ministry in 1759, and died in the faith of Christ in 1800. He was a man of great respectability and integrity, sound in judgment, and unblameable in conversation. His colleague, Mr. Guilford, had been in the army several years; he became a Methodist preacher in 1761, and died in triumph in 1777. While he was in the army, the Duke of Cumberland, who was then Commander-in-chief, was desired by some of the enemies of religion, to put a stop to the meetings of the praying soldiers. One day the Duke was passing by where a number of them were

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Methodists were fitting up a place for public worship. In this, there was nothing but what might be justified; but when he entered the dwellings of the Methodists with copies, it was deemed high time to act on the defensive: and being importuned to take up the subject, the writer published a reply, entitled, "Remarks on a Pamphlet, lately circulated in the neighbourhood of Cawthorne; ironically entitled, 'An Earnest and Affectionate Address to the People called Methodists:' in Six Letters to a Friend. By James Everett." Motto—"His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords. *Psal.* Barnsley: printed by Greaves, Oct. pp. 54."

\* Minutes, vol. i. p. 52.

† Ibid. pp. 54, 55.

gathered together praying. Mr. Guilford was then engaged in that divine exercise; and while the Duke was listening at the door, he was earnestly intreating God in behalf of His Majesty King George, and all the royal family. The Duke, who heard him with deep attention, seemed much affected; and said to those who were with him, "I would to God that all the soldiers in the British army were like these men!"\* He brought the hero out of the army with him, and feared the face of no man. While he was at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, to which the circuit appears to have then extended, he was rendered useful in the conviction of Mr. Berrisford, in explaining the parable of the barren fig-tree.†

After the business of the Conference was closed, Mr. WESLEY left Leeds, and reached Rotherham, August 17. The next day, instead of coming on to Sheffield, he changed his route, and arrived at Leicester the same night, on his road to London.‡

The Rotherham Society, which, above others, was favoured on the present occasion by a visit from its head, was called to witness a very solemn dispensation. While Mr. Guilford was giving tickets on a Sunday afternoon, at half-past one o'clock, in Wm. Green's house, to the members of Mrs. Green's class, a female of the name of Betty Rowley was present to receive her token of church-fellowship. Mr. Guilford, having been informed of the violent persecution she experienced from her husband, said, "Betty, if you had no connection with the Methodists, and were persuaded that, by uniting yourself to them, you would meet with all the opposition you have hitherto had to bear, could you, do you think, cheerfully go through the whole, and join yourself to them?" "O yes, Sir," she exultingly replied; "if I was aware that I had ten times more to suffer, I could undergo the whole in the service of the Lord." She sate by the side of a couch, and the words were no sooner uttered, than she almost instantly fell back, and expired. Whenever this good woman went to chapel in the evening, she was invariably locked out,

\* Atmore's Meth. Mem., p. 171.

† Meth. Mag. 1805, p. 96.

‡ Journals, vol. iv. p. 288.

and turned to the door for the night. Under these circumstances, she frequently returned to the chapel, and slept in one of the pews all night, with the Bible for her pillow, to be ready for five o'clock preaching next morning.

## CHAP. XVI.

*The Pulpit and Reading Desk—Wesley's Appeals and Sellon's Tracts—Benjamin Barber—Letter of a tenant to his landlord—Messrs. Brown and Shaw—Death of Mrs. Holy—George Paramore and Francis Hawke—Messrs. Costerdine and Witten—Preaching at Blythe—Death of Mrs. Johnson, of Barley Hall—Samuel Smith—Parson Greenwood—A Society formed at Rammarsh.*

1767. A PAMPHLET appeared this year, entitled, "A Dialogue between the Pulpit and the Reading Desk," 12mo. pp. 93. This pamphlet has been erroneously ascribed to the Rev. Vincent Perronet, late vicar of Shoreham, in Kent; while, with others, it has passed without any author's name being affixed to it: both of these classes of people have now to be informed, that it was written and published by Wm. Green, of Rotherham. He styles himself in the title-page, "A member of the Church of England," firmly believing in the doctrines embodied in the Liturgy, Homilies, and Articles of the Establishment. The leading doctrines of the gospel are clearly stated, and well supported by the writer. The Pulpit is perhaps scarcely permitted to have a sufficient share in the conversation; and the Reading Desk, which takes the side espoused by the author, was, as is the case in all Dialogues, certain to obtain the polemical palm. The writer was probably urged to its publication, through the circulation of the tract, entitled, "An Earnest and Affectionate Address to the People called Methodists," which proceeded from the clergy of the Established Church, concluding a counter address necessary, in a conversational form; and certainly the one came from a pious Methodist with as suitable a grace, as the other came from the less zealous and less correct of the clergy, some of whom were industrious in the circulation of the "Affectionate



Address" in the neighbourhood where Wm. Green resided. Wm. Green's pamphlet was well timed; it was extremely popular for several years, and sold at 8d. An edition of it was printed by a bookseller in 1817, at Lancaster, which is now published by Seely, publisher of the Christian Guardian, the Missionary Register, and other publications belonging to the low-church party.

In addition to the "Pulpit and the Reading Desk," Mr. WESLEY'S "Appeals," 6d. each, began to be for the first time circulated in the neighbourhood; also the tracts of the Rev. Walter Sellon, especially his answer to Hervey's "Aspasio." From hence, as from an arsenal, the members of Society were enabled to draw forth those weapons by which they defended themselves from the attacks made upon them by the high-church party, and those who embraced the creed of Mr. Whitfield, from a portion of each of which some rude attacks were occasionally experienced.

They were not arguments, however, either from Scripture or reason, that would always smooth the brows of those who opposed the Methodists; nor were arguments in every instance employed by such opposers. Landlords not unfrequently threatened to unhouse those of their tenants who encouraged the Methodists, and in some instances put their menaces into execution. A letter now lies before the writer, of a tenant to his landlord on this particular subject, preserved by W. Green; the case occurring either in Rotherham or its immediate vicinity. The poor man proceeds thus:—

"Sir,

"I am extremely obliged to you for your letter; I never met with such freedom before from my superiors, not even when I was guilty of many vices, and in the broad way to destruction: no one ever took such pains at that period with me to show me my danger. I must confess I am very ignorant, and shall be obliged to any one who will shew me my error from Scripture. But, Sir, there are some hard words in your letter, which I do not understand. What is it, Sir, that you mean by *conventicles*? Do you refer to those places in which

people meet to sing Psalms, read the Word of God, and pray together? If so, I hope there is not any thing in this, Sir, contrary to either the laws of God or of man. Thank the Lord! we are blessed with liberty of conscience, and Christ declares, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he is there in the midst of them. It can surely be no crime in churchmen doing these things; and those with whom I am connected stick close to the church, and have no desire to leave it. Can any of us be too good? or were any ever heard to say in their last hours, they had done too much good for heaven? You are aware how persons can meet daily in public houses to drink, carouse, and swear; and yet how few stewards or landlords threaten to turn them out of doors. But is it any wonder? We have often heard, and often thought, that it was hard usage for Christ to be born in a stable, when no place was found for him in the inn! Even so, as it was in the beginning, so it ever will be. Noah, Lot, the children of Israel, the prophets and apostles, met with the like treatment. We hear, however, that it is dangerous for persons to offend any of these little ones: and, if it should ever so happen, that I shall be turned out of my house, that God whom I serve will provide for me; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. I can easily account for you being displeased with me, because of me making my house a house of prayer. I believe, Sir, it is not your disposition to distress a poor man; it belongs chiefly to others who have put you upon this. Nevertheless, I shall make no promise, either in one way or other: if the Methodists come to my house, I shall not turn them out. and if some prevail on you to do what you threaten, I shall think good Mr. Bower is changed into Bishop Bonner. From, Sir,

"Your servant,

"1767.

"R. Sh——."

When the numbers in Society were taken, to forward to the Conference, which was held in London, Aug. 18, they were found to amount to 591, an increase only of eight members throughout the circuit during the year, allowing for deaths, removals, &c. The preachers

appointed to succeed Messrs. Roberts and Guilford, were Mr. Isaac Brown and Mr. John Shaw. The latter of these good men began his itinerant career in 1762; and terminated it in 1793. The following testimony is borne to his character and ministry by the Conference:—  
 “He laboured for thirty years as a travelling preacher; was useful in every circuit where he was stationed, and died with unshaken confidence in God.”\*

Though the circuit continued of unwieldly extent, it was narrowed a little this year by a transfer of Buxton, Tideswell, and other places in the High Peak of Derbyshire, which had hitherto been supplied by the Sheffield preachers, to Manchester.† This change was attended with advantage to the places thus given up, which, from their contiguity to others, visited by the Manchester preachers, could be more frequently supplied with preaching.‡

Bradwell was still retained, and was one of the furthest places to the west, which the Sheffield preachers continued to visit. Here Benjamin Barber resided, and was the principal stay of the little Society. This good man was applied to by some persons who held shares of a lead mine, near Foolow, Derbyshire, to supply the place of several agents, who, in succession, had proved unfaithful to their trust. No one appeared so likely for their purpose as Benjamin; but — Clay, Esq., near Sheffield, who held the principal share of the mine, was to be consulted, and they knew not how far his prejudices against the Methodists might operate against self-interest. However, Benjamin was sent to him with a note of recommendation highly in his favour. He was found, on the closest examination, every way competent to the work: but as though Mr. Clay had received some previous information on the subject, he asked, “What is your religious profession?” “A Methodist, Sir,” was the reply. “If you engage in this work, I shall expect you to renounce all connection with the Methodists, and rigidly to attend to the service of the Church of England.” “Sir,” said Benjamin, “I am a

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\* Minutes, vol. i. p. 265. † Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 367. ‡ Journals, vol. iv. p. 372.

poor man, and have a large family to support; but if that be one of the conditions of our agreement, I must say, that, from the good I have derived from the Methodists, rather than renounce them, I will beg my bread from door to door first." The gentleman finding him firm, dismissed him by saying, that he might enter upon the situation on trial. The whole of the partners proved him to be a man of sterling integrity, and were soon convinced that it was their interest to preserve such a valuable acquisition to the concern. Whenever Benjamin, after this, had occasion to visit Mr. Clay, he was invariably placed at the same table with himself, whatever company might be present; and received the appellation of "my trusty servant Benjamin." Mr. Clay left it in his will, that Benjamin, on the supposition of the mine failing, should receive his regular salary for life, as a token of the high respect he entertained for him. Benjamin was a class-leader and exhorter; and, in connexion with Mr. Matt. Mayer, was one of the apostles of the Peak. To few men, after David Taylor and John Bennet, were the miners of Derbyshire more greatly indebted, than to Mr. Matt. Mayer, of Stockport, and Benjamin Barber, of Bradwell. Benjamin, like others, carried the marks which some of the persecutors had made upon his frame to the grave with him.

1768. Little as the year preceding is distinguished for variety of incident, it is preserved in countenance by the present, which, but for two or three particulars, might be passed over unnoticed. But one of those particulars is important of itself, and was deeply felt by the Society in Sheffield,—the death of Mrs. Holy, mother of the present T. Holy, Esq. She was born, December, 1725. Her husband, who died previous to her union with the Methodists, was a man that feared God. They were tenderly attached to each other; and such was the effect his death produced upon her spirits, that, had she not obtained experimental religion, there is little doubt that it would have terminated in her own. She wore her mourning attire to the close of life. Her funeral sermon was preached by the late Mr. Matt. Mayer, of Stockport, in Mulberry-street Chapel, on which solemn occasion several persons were deeply awaken-



ed.\* Her life had been highly exemplary, and her end was truly blessed. She met in the class that was held in the house of Luke Staniforth, No. 2, Silver-street. The following anecdote, which, with other particulars, was related to the writer by Mr. Holy, it would be unpardonable not to notice, though not related with a view to publication. After Mr. Holy was of age, he was rallied by an acquaintance for connecting himself with a people so mean as the Methodists, and a people too, he observed, "who never had done any good in the world, but rather harm." Mr. H. asked, "Is that your serious opinion, Sir?" The gentleman replied, "It is." It was immediately rejoined, "Pray what is your candid opinion of the case of my mother, whose memory, I know, is dear to you?" It was returned, "Well, I really do think, if some change had not taken place, the influence which your father's death had upon her was such, that it would have been fatal to her life; but then it comes to the same end at last, for excessive joy and excessive grief produce the same effects on the human system; in the one case she would have died of grief, in the other she died of joy." This is a noble testimony in favour of experimental religion, though reluctantly dragged forth, and disfigured in its detail.

While the Society had to record the inroads made by death upon its number, it also had to register, in other instances, a life from the dead. Two of these may be noticed, George Paramore and Francis Hawke. The former was born at Doncaster, and was apprenticed to a printer in Sheffield, where, through the instrumentality of an elder brother, his mind was seriously impressed with the importance of Divine subjects: and from a conviction of the necessity and advantage of Christian fellowship, he now, in the 14th year of his age, joined the Society, and was soon made a partaker of the consolations of the Holy Spirit. He met with great opposition, and endured various hardships in and from the family with whom he lived. He was enabled, however, to maintain his ground; and throughout the whole course of his pilgrimage, was thankful that his lot

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\* Meth. Mag. 1816, p. 166.

was cast among the children of God so early in life. When out of his apprenticeship, he went to London, and followed his business. Being often requested by his employers to work on the Lord's day, he conscientiously refused, for which he was discharged from his employ: but this, he remarked, turned, without exception, to his advantage, as he found a superior situation immediately. He was an useful and acceptable local preacher for thirty years, frequently visiting prisoners, and preaching in workhouses, &c. He also had the superintendence of the Conference printing-office some years. In his family, he was a priest, attending to the duties of religion, praying with them three times a day, singing the praises of God, and reading the Scriptures; often expressing the happiness he experienced in thus having an altar for God beneath the shadow of his own roof. His end was tranquil. He breathed his spirit into the hands of his Maker on Christmas day, 1812, in the 58th year of his age, at Hoxton.\*

Before Francis Hawke was savingly converted to God, he was the subject of deep conviction. Hunter, speaking of the Sheaf, says, "In the year 1768, it carried down the houses which form the north side of Talbot's Hospital, when five of the pensioners lost their lives."† This terrible catastrophe was witnessed by Francis Hawke and many others; and when he saw the bodies of the sufferers taken out of the water, he was so impressed with the uncertain tenure on which human life is held, the necessary preparations for another, and the solemnities of death, that his conscience became alarmed. But though this was one of the days of his visitation, he did not yield himself up to God till some time after. The following is the purport of what he related to the late Mr. Barber, on the subject of his conversion to God. "I was a hard drinker, miserably poor, and had a wife and several children dependant upon me for support. Given to pleasure, I went to York races‡, with only eightpence in my pocket. When, on my return, I was within about two miles of

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\* Meth. Mag. 1813, p. 473.  
 † Hist. of Hallam. p. 3.  
 ‡ A distance of between 50 and 60 miles.

Sheffield, I was so completely exhausted with walking and want of food, that I lay down to drink of a small brook which crossed the road. It refreshed me a little, but I felt as though I should be scarcely able to reach home. I thought within myself, that I had a hard master in the devil, who always kept me poor and miserable. Little encouragement as I had to pray, I lifted my heart up to God, and promised that if he would spare me, and give me strength to reach home, that I would from that hour begin to serve him. Strength seemed to be infused into me as I prayed; I felt revived, and at last arrived in Sheffield about midnight. My wife opened the door, there was nothing to eat in the house, I lay down, and after sleeping a few hours, went to my work. I wrought, wept, and prayed; and went in the evening to Mulberry-street Chapel. My convictions were increased, I went to Class, and at length obtained a sense of the Divine favour. One circumstance I cannot pass over, as it shews a kind Providence. It was some time before I got my debts paid; and on one occasion, I was reduced to a halfpenny. It was the evening on which I had to meet my class; but not having a penny\*, like others, I was tempted not to go. After a great deal of reasoning, I at length went, found a halfpenny on the road, and since that day I have never wanted a penny for the cause of God." This statement he made to Mr. Barber, in 1785, at which period he was in respectable circumstances. He entertained Mr. WESLEY the last time he was in Sheffield. Through the same mysterious Providence which had raised him, he was again brought low; but never departed from his steadfastness in the Lord. When the question was first agitated respecting the erection of Carver-street Chapel, Francis prayed devoutly that he might be permitted to see it built, and also that he might be spared to see a Methodist Conference held in Sheffield. He was permitted to see both: the chapel was begun in 1804, and the Conference was held in it,

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\* The penny-a-week system, which properly originated with the Methodists, and was scouted by numbers, is now adopted by Bible, Missionary, and other Societies, by the very parties who condemned it, and has met with the most sturdy advocates.

July, 1805, two or three weeks after the close of which, Francis Hawke's funeral sermon was preached in the building, for the completion of which he had so fervently prayed.

In the month of July, Mr. WESLEY took Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield, on his route to Madely\*; and at the Conference held in Bristol, August 16, Mr. Robert Costerdine and Mr. John Wittam were stationed here. The numbers in Society were six hundred, an increase of nine. Mr. Costerdine, though never till now appointed to labour in the Sheffield circuit, had nevertheless preached a good deal about its confines. He was in the Epworth circuit in 1764, which extended to Blythe, in Nottinghamshire, within a short distance of which, the preachers from Sheffield went. He observes, "I received a letter from Blythe, containing an invitation to go and preach a club sermon. I found that it was a place which the Methodists had not visited. I took my stand under a sycamore tree in the market-place. The gentlemen who encouraged the club, ordered their men, with white wands, to keep order: hundreds of people attended, insomuch that the market-place was filled, as well as all the windows of the houses. Lord Scarborough, and a gentleman from Bawtry, were on my right hand, in their coaches. All was still as night, and I have cause to believe, that the word preached was attended with a blessing. After I had dismissed the congregation, I dined with the members of the club, and was astonished at their prudent behaviour; for all waited till I had asked a blessing, and likewise till I returned thanks. After dinner, several of the gentleman offered to pay me for my trouble, but I refused their offer. When the squire from Bawtry heard that I would accept no reward for my labour, he said, the report concerning the Methodists is false; for it is said that the preachers go about for money, but I learn that this preacher will take none, either directly or indirectly."† As Mr. Costerdine was subsequently to this, again appointed to the Sheffield

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\* Journals, vol. iv. p. 372.

† Meth. Mem. 1814, p. 165.



circuit, his history will be renewed. His colleague, Mr. Wittam, had only itinerated a year, but died on the work at an advanced age. They laboured together in love, but saw little prosperity.

1769. February 18, 1769, good old Mrs. Johnson, of Barley Hall \*, took her flight to the paradise of God. At what period Mr. Johnson died, there are now no means of ascertaining. It was with emotions of pleasure that the writer of these pages visited the venerable domain while the history was in progress, where this pious pair lived and died, where Mr. WESLEY and the first Methodist preachers found a temple and a home; and, sketching the premises and grounds for future gratification, the work of the pencil was borne away with triumph. Prior to Mr. Johnson's occupation of the house and the farm, they belonged to a gentleman of the name of Hague, a tanner. Mr. Johnson, who succeeded him, carried on the skinning business, exclusive of tanning. After the death of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, the farm passed into the hands of a Mr. Bowers, and it is now occupied by a person of the name of Ellis. The pits have long been filled up, and the ploughshare has passed over them. It is only known to Mr. Birks and a few more of the patriarchal race, that hides were tanned in that neighbourhood. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were originally Dissenters, and were brought among the Methodists through the instrumentality of David Taylor, who had acted as a pioneer to Mr. WESLEY in innumerable instances.

Like all the others through the connexion, this circuit continued to sustain occasional losses, by the removal of some of the most useful and popular local preachers, who entered upon a more extended scale of usefulness in engaging in the work of itinerancy. Samuel Smith, whose parents had been among the first to lodge the Methodist preachers, and who had acted sometime in the capacity of a local preacher, was appointed at the Conference held in Leeds, August 1, to labour in Derbyshire.† He preached with success for

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\* Originally Barley-hole, being partly in a hollow.  
vol. i. p. 82.

† Minutes,

some years, but at length becoming inflated with pride, he left the work in 1782. He afterwards embraced the system of Baron Swedenburgh, and presided over a congregation in the city of Norwich, in which place he closed, with his life, his ministry.

At this Conference, the number of members through the whole circuit stood only at 595, a decrease of five, compared with the year preceding. The Society in Sheffield received from the Conference the sum of £8, Rotherham £29, and Bradwell £9, to relieve them in their necessitous circumstances: and the circuit in return, as its quota, had to contribute £3 15s. towards the support of preachers' wives.\* The preachers appointed were Mr. Parson Greenwood, and Mr. James Longbotham, the latter of whom began to itinerate in 1765, and departed from the work, either for want of health or other circumstances, the year after he was stationed at Sheffield.

To the little Society in Rawmarsh, near Rotherham, the appointment of Parson Greenwood to the circuit is rendered memorable, being the first travelling preacher who opened his commission in the village. The following particulars were communicated by Mr. James Bennett, a member of that Society, and a local preacher in the Rotherham circuit. Previous to the formation of any Society in the town of Rotherham, there lived in Rawmarsh a good woman of the name of Alice Murfin, who was in the habit of going to Barley Hall for several years to meet in class, a distance of five miles. She stood alone as a Methodist in the village, and till Wm. Green fixed his residence in Rotherham, the only friends with whom she could take sweet counsel were those who met in class in the neighbourhood of Thorp. In common with most of the early Methodists, she "endured a great fight of afflictions" from the wicked, "whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." One thing in particular hurt her much, and the more so, as it became a source of temptation. She had a son an idiot; and such was the malignity of heart manifested by some of her neighbours, that, instead of sympa-

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\* Minutes, vol. i. pp. 85, 87.

thizing with her, they insinuated that it was a judgment of God inflicted upon her for her hypocrisy. She knew the integrity with which she acted, but still she did not know how far it might be a visitation of God for sins committed previous to her conversion to the truth. With equal simplicity and sincerity, she went to a pious minister who resided at Thribergh, to whom she unboresomed her mind. Like a man of God, he took up his Bible, and directed her attention to the case of the person born blind, in the 9th chap. of St. John's gospel,—“And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” He enlarged on these words, and the whole proved a source of comfort to the disconsolate mother. When the good woman obtained two or three religious companions, they alternately met in one another's houses to strengthen each other in the Lord. A lady seeing them walking together one day, rather sarcastically observed, “Birds of a feather flock together, I perceive.” “It is seldom,” replied Alice, “you find pigeons among crows.”

Wm. Green, who was the first local preacher that visited Rawmarsh, was induced to go thither at the suggestion of Mr. Burton, of Manchester, who, on his return home from visiting his brother-in-law, Mr. Joseph Hall, called at Rotherham, and spoke to him on the subject. Mr. Hall opened his house for preaching the night following, when Wm. Green was glad of the opportunity of favouring the people with a sermon. From that time, preaching was established among the Methodists in the village. The day on which Mr. P. Greenwood, for the first time, preached at Rawmarsh, was the memorable 5th of November, the very day on which the fact and the history of the little Society was penned for the press, to be handed down, with the preaching itself, to those who may follow the steps of such as have gone before,—a coincidence, which, as it only occurred while running along the sentence, the act of committing it to paper, trivial as it may appear, seemed irresistible. The morning following the preaching, the clergyman of

the parish inquired of one of his servants whether a large company had been collected around the bonfire the preceding evening. To which the person interrogated replied, "No, Sir, there were very few; most of the people were at Joseph Hall's." It was immediately demanded, "What were they doing there?" "Hearing the Methodist preacher," it was returned. Inquiry was next made respecting the landlord of Joseph Hall, when it was found that he rented the house of a person, who again held it, with other buildings, of an elderly gentlewoman. The latter accosted the first householder, when paying his rent, with, "What, your tenant has turned Methodist? and that is not all, but I understand he takes in the Methodist preachers?" "Madam," rejoined the man, who seemed possessed of very little of either fear or courtesy, "when we let a house, we never tell the people what sort of company they are to entertain in it; and be the man a Methodist, or what he will, it matters not to me, for he always pays his rent, and that is all I want." This is not the language of a man, who, if he valued what he tenanted, held it from year to year, but one who adapted his language to the length of the lease on which he held it. A Society was formed in the village by Mr. Greenwood; and on leaving the circuit, he wrote on a pane of the window of the house, as a kind of memento, the people being strongly attached to him, the following pious but very humble lines, which were greatly in use about this period. and evince a proximity of taste with the lovers of Sternhold and Hopkins, in such as departed from Mr. WESLEY's excellent Collection of Hymns:—

"Farewell, my dearest friends, farewell,  
Since we awhile must parted be,  
Until we land on Zion's hill,  
My dearest brethren, pray for me:

And if I never see you more,  
Till time commence eternity,  
This favour of you I implore,  
My dearest brethren, pray for me."

Joseph Hall, who received a prophet in the name of a



prophet, has since gone to reap a prophet's reward. His good wife, after being much exercised with perplexing though frequently groundless fears, through life, died rejoicing in God, February, 1799; and Joseph finished his course in peace, August, 1803.

## CHAP. XVII.

*Mr. Mayer—Chapel erected in Doncaster—Mr. Wesley—Messrs. Woodcock and Bardsley—How far a parent's voice ought to be heard on the marriage of a child—James Walker—Jeremiah Cocker—Disturbance at Mulberry-street Chapel—Potter-Hill—Methodism introduced into Brimington.*

1770. Mr. MATTHEW MAYER, who had preached Mrs. Holy's funeral sermon two years before, again visited Sheffield in the month of May. Previously to his coming to Sheffield, he had been exposed to the rain in the neighbourhood of Leeds, and not having taken the precaution to change his clothes, he caught a severe cold, which produced a good deal of fever, that was increased by the labours of the Sabbath. He had written, however, that he would be at Sheffield on the Monday evening, and he was determined, if possible, not to disappoint the Society. In this very unfit state, he rode on horse-back thirty miles in much pain, and when he arrived at Sheffield, was scarcely able to dismount. He was so lame that he could not walk to the chapel, but rode thither; and with difficulty ascended the pulpit. While engaged in the work of his Divine Master, he appears to have forgotten his indisposition; for he remarked on the occasion, "I began to preach in great pain, but, blessed be God, his presence gave ease in pain, and it was a blessed season to myself, and to many precious souls." Next morning he was confined to bed of a severe rheumatic fever, which detained him three weeks in Mr. Holy's family, whose kindness and attention on the occasion Mr. Mayer always remembered with feelings of gratitude and respect.\*

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\* Meth. Mag. 1816, p. 166.

An article among the papers of Wm. Green, of Rotherham, for this year, is headed thus:—"An account of the expense of my school-building in the preaching-house yard." This school, which cost between thirty and forty pounds, was built for the better accommodation of the children: its being built, however, in the chapel-yard, was no doubt for the better protection of the chapel itself from the despoiling hands of the enemies of Methodism, who availed themselves of every opportunity of injuring both persons and property.

Such was the state of the Society in Doncaster, as not only to require, but to effect the erection of a chapel. "Wednesday, July 11," says Mr. WESLEY, "I rode to Doncaster, and preached at noon at the new house: one of the neatest in England. It was sufficiently crowded, and, what is more strange, with serious and attentive hearers: what was more unlikely, some years since, than that such a house, or such a congregation, should be seen here? In the evening I preached at Finningley; the church was filled; but, I fear, few felt the word."\* From thence he proceeded into Lincolnshire; and on Monday the 23d of the same month returned, and "preached at Doncaster and Rotherham: on Tuesday and Wednesday at Sheffield. On Wednesday evening," he continues, "my heart was so enlarged that I knew not how to leave off. Do some say, 'I preach longer than usual, when I am barren?' It is quite the contrary with me. So that it is strange, if I exceed my time above a quarter of an hour."†

Though great harmony prevailed between the preachers and the people, and partial prosperity was experienced in particular Societies, yet when the numbers were taken to the Conference, which was held in London, August 7, they amounted throughout the whole circuit to only 597,—an increase of *two*. Samuel Woodcock and Samuel Bardsley were the preachers stationed here in the place of Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Longbotham. At this time, Sheffield received £48 : 10 : 2d. from the Conference to supply its deficiencies‡, and had to provide for one wife, and the half

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\* Journals, vol. iv. p. 449.

† Ibid. p. 451.

‡ Minutes.

of the expense of a second, the additional half being so much more than that of the year preceding.

Samuel Woodcock entered the itinerant life in 1765, and departed from it in 1776. But little is known of either his usefulness or his abilities. Of Samuel Bardsley much more may be said; but as his character will again pass in review, it will here be necessary to observe brevity. It was with a feeling of peculiar pleasure, that the old gentleman, in open Conference, held at Sheffield in 1817, adverted to his first entrance into the town; and never shall the writer of these pages forget the effect which his simple apostolic address produced upon both preachers and people on the occasion. He contrasted the congregations accustomed to assemble in Norfolk and Carver-street Chapels, with that which attended his ministry in Mulberry-street in 1770,—the pacific spirit of 1817, when brought to bear upon the stormy spirit of earlier times,—and particularly noticed the welcome reception he experienced from the “warm-hearted Sheffield cutlers, who,” still to proceed with his own language, “when shaking hands, appeared as though they would squeeze the blood out at the fingers’ ends,” thus operating like the vices they were accustomed to handle. The attachment was mutual. One of the preachers, who succeeded Mr. Bardsley in the present appointment, writes thus to him:—“You love the Sheffield people, and they have nothing, I am sure, but love towards you. I can, ere this, prophesy my own love to them; and the reason which I have to assign for it, is that which was assigned by yourself, ‘There are many of them right precious in the sight of the Lord.’”

Mr. Bardsley had at this time some thoughts of entering into the marriage-state with a pious young female of the name of Mary Charlton. There are letters in the possession of the writer, detailing every plausible pretext both for and against such a step; and the result was, that he lived and died a bachelor. The subject is here noticed with a view to introduce a letter of Mr. WESLEY’S, which may be of some importance to the members of Society, as containing his opinion on a point which involves filial respect and filial duty.



*“ London, Nov. 24, 1770.*

“ Dear Sammy,

“ According to your account the very same difficulty subsists to this day. Your mother is not willing: and I told you before, this is, in my judgment, an insuperable bar. I am fully persuaded that a parent has in this case a negative voice. Therefore, while matters continue thus, I do not see, that you can go any further. I am,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ J. WESLEY.

“ To Mr. Samuel Bardsley, at Mr. James Walker’s, in  
“ Sheffield.”

While some of the brethren alleged the delicate state of the young woman’s health, the slender funds of the connexion to support others than single men, &c. &c., Mr. WESLEY very properly rested the principal weight of the objection to the marriage on the “ negative voice” of Mr. Bardsley’s mother. This opinion of Mr. WESLEY’s, which was given in other cases, when connected with peculiar circumstances, awarded to him considerable censure from such as were unacquainted with every peculiarity; but to say nothing of the arguments by which “ this case” might be supported, rendered so emphatic by him to whom Mr. Bardsley was accustomed to look up as his father in the gospel, it will be sufficient to accompany it at present with the example of the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, who, at the age of twenty-five, when Mrs. Porter had signified her willingness to accept of his hand, travelled from Birmingham to Lichfield to ask the consent of his mother to the marriage\*; a species of conduct which will be the subject of laughter, by those who imagine that parental restraint and authority expires with youth, and with whom passion has obtained the ascendancy over reason, but which affords us a view of one of the finest traits in his filial character.

The preachers appear now to have been resident with Mr. James Walker, the person to whose care the

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\* Boswell’s Life of Johnson.

letter to Mr. Bardsley was intrusted: and such was the veneration which the descendants of this good man had for Mr. Bardsley, who had been accustomed to prattle to him as children, but who themselves had children at the age of manhood when he latterly visited them, that they regularly entertained him, during successive Conferences, at their house in Sheffield. It was under Mr. Bardsley's ministry, and during this appointment to the circuit, that the late wife of Mr. Benjamin Wilkinson was brought to an experimental acquaintance with the truth of God. She was first allured to Mulberry-street Chapel by the charms of vocal music, the singing being much admired and well conducted. She died in 1820; and her death was an interesting and an instructive lesson to the writer, who saw and conversed with her a day or two previous to her death. Her funeral sermon was preached in Carver-street Chapel by Mr. Entwisle. Another of those who were brought to God under the ministry of Mr. Bardsley was, Mr. Crowder, of Rotherham, still living.

A little respite had been enjoyed by the Society in Sheffield from persecution; but as the evenings began to lengthen, the disturbers of civil and religious order increased in the violence of their proceedings. The principal friends were again compelled, as they often had been before, to watch the chapel doors during Divine service. To give, however, if possible, an early and an effectual check to such outrages, they resolved to make an example of the first of the disturbers that could be secured. It was one evening while Jeremiah Cocker was keeping watch, that the rabble assembled; and being an athletic man, he took hold of the ring-leader, and conducted him into the chapel. After the congregation was dismissed, he remained behind in a state of durance, with several of the friends, while the mob were bellowing without, and forming plans of rescue. Jeremiah Cocker requested James Walker, J. Paramore, and some others to protect him, some before and some behind, some to the right and some to the left, he himself taking upon him all responsibility for the security of the prisoner, whom they intended to take before a magistrate. The moment the chapel-doors

were opened, the rioters set up a shout; Cocker came out with a firm hold of the man; but such was the tumult and noise, that James Walker and the others were afraid of serious consequences, and returned into the chapel. It was too late for Cocker to secure a retreat, and he had too much daring about him to yield till overpowered by strength. He was borne away by the crowd, as by a torrent, into High-street, his feet scarcely touching the ground the greater part of the road; but still maintaining a stubborn hold of his captive. Various methods were tried when they got into High-street to effect a deliverance; but every effort proved abortive, till a small space was cleared, apparently by design, and a person of some weight ran towards Cocker, and threw himself with considerable violence immediately betwixt him and the person in custody, and falling upon the extended arm, broke the hold. The prisoner being disengaged, the next work was, to recompense Cocker for the active part which he had taken. Cocker had one fine quality for scenes of tumult and danger, that of courage, but he wanted temper: this frequently gave great uneasiness to his best friends. The mob knew their man; they knew that he was to be irritated, not intimidated, and acted accordingly. He took his first stand immediately opposite the gateway leading from High-street into Mulberry-street, with his back against the front of the house. Here his opposers held him like a stag at bay, forming a kind of crescent before him, no one daring to engage him singly, and each afraid, if properly roused, of the weight of his heavy hand. He recollected past insults, and saw several before him who had offered them. He began to lose his balance, and to feel partially inflamed with passion; and glancing his eyes fiercely from one to another, the quick succession of injuries which he had received seemed to prevent him for the moment from taking them in their turn; or, like a baited animal, who, surrounded by his tormentors, is at a loss to choose from the immediate objects of his ire. Just as his choler began to rise, an opening appeared to his left, when he burst away, with the crowd after him, and took his next stand near the passage leading from the Shambles to the Hartshead.

Imagining his courage to be failing him, the mob improved upon it, and began to press him a little closer, when he declared that the first who came within the reach of his arm should be laid upon the ground before him. This threat enraged two in particular, who went up to him, but who were no sooner within reach than both were knocked down. This occasioned considerable confusion and timidity, and the moment was embraced for flight. He took his third stand beneath a lamp in the Hartshead; and when properly fixed, he told them that he had now brought them into a narrower compass, and was apparently preparing for offensive operations. When this was observed by his pursuers, they fled, and he again endeavoured to escape. His flight was the signal for their return; they lost sight of him, and supposing him to have gone straight forward, they ran in that direction; but he had turned short to the left, just in the front of what is now the Iris-office, and took shelter in the house of James Walker. By that time, James had reached home, and, on seeing Jeremiah, said, "I was afraid they had killed you." "They might," it was replied, "for any aid which I received from those who ought to have supported me."

Though the conduct of the mob was highly discreditable, yet by no process of reasoning whatever can Cocker be justified for the part which he acted. There was too much of the *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, or of *like for like*, in his system; a law of which we have an early intimation among the Jews\*, and which afterwards prevailed so much among the Greeks and Romans, but which our Lord condemned both in precept and practice. When he was reviled, he reviled not again: that law is peremptory, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."† Retaliation can only contribute to the support of that from which it originated, a vindictive, revengeful spirit. In case of assault, the laws of the land can be appealed to, both in civil and religious matters: or should an attempt be made upon life or property, from a villanous princi-

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\* Exod. xxi. 24.

† Matth. v. 39.



ple, without any reference to religious character, both duty and interest unite in urging even a Christian man to ward off the blow and repel the aggressor. But when opposition assumes the shape of persecution, or, in other words, when religion in one, is the cause or reason of hostility in another, then, to shew that that religion is actually possessed, its spirit should be displayed in the meek and quiet deportment of its professor; like the saints of old, who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, who considered it all joy that they were accounted worthy to suffer in the cause of Christ, and who suffered even to the death. Had Jeremiah Cocker permitted religion to have its full influence upon his heart, it would have tamed that spirit which was let loose in blows upon his persecutors. It is through such conduct that Methodism has occasionally been injured; when the weight of the odium has, for want of due discrimination, fallen upon *her* instead of the *man*, as though it was her peculiar genius to promote opposition.

Some of the smaller villages which had been favoured with the labours of the local preachers, received an occasional visit from the brethren stationed on the circuit. Such was the case with Potter-hill, according to information industriously obtained and obligingly imparted to the writer by Mr. Thomas Newton, of Thorncliffe. The poverty of the good people led them to equalize the expense as much as possible, as no one was found sufficiently opulent to sustain the whole; hence one person kept the preacher's horse, another boarded and lodged the preacher himself; and both the one and the other not unfrequently changed residences with the returning visit. From this period to 1792, the numbers in the small Society here remained stationary, a new member filling up a vacancy occasioned by death, and rarely exceeding sixteen or seventeen. Both here, and in the whole of the neighbouring Societies, the hymn, commencing with "The God of Abraham praise," composed by Mr. Thomas Olivers, was in high repute.

A circumstance which led to the introduction of Methodism into Brimington, a village in the neighbourhood of Chesterfield, ought not to be unnoticed, as it forms, in its leading character, a parallel case to that

of Onesimus's, so admirably improved by St. Paul in his Epistle to Philemon. There was a young man who absconded from his master and from his parents; during his absence, he heard the preachers in connexion with Mr. WESLEY, and, through their instrumentality, became a convert to the faith of Christ. Possessing the pearl of great price himself, he was not only led from principles of justice to return to his servitude, but also from a desire to promote the salvation of his relatives and friends. He invited the Methodists to the village: but whether his parents were poor, or inimical to the reception and residence of an itinerant preacher beneath their roof, is not now known; certain, however, it is, that the first preacher who visited the village, made a public-house his place of rest, and occasioned a considerable sensation among the inhabitants. Some of the colliers threatened to kill him; and, that they might go through the work with spirit, they inflamed themselves with intoxicating liquor. When sufficiently prepared for deeds of rebellion of any description, they assembled before the house in which the preacher was lodged, vociferating, "Bring him out." The preacher immediately obeyed the summons, and stood in the doorway; the shout was re-echoed, "Bring him further out;" others, a little more temperate, said, "We will hear him preach before he is molested." After the tempest had abated sufficiently to render his voice audible, he began to preach; and he had not proceeded far, when perfect stillness reigned over the whole of his auditory.

## CHAP. XVII.

*Mr. Bardsley—Letter from Mr. Wesley—Mr. Shirley's counterpart to his famous circular—Messrs. Moulson, Garnet, and Bacon—Preachers' board, salary, and other financial matters—Invidious contrasts between ancient and modern itinerancy—A controversial spirit—Interruptions of public worship—Fatal effects of prosperity without increased watchfulness and diligence—Some account of the extent of the circuit and the labours of the preachers—Little things assume importance when associated with greater—Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, of Hayland—Providential escape—Number of leaders and places of meeting.*

1771. FROM a letter of Mr. Bardsley's to Mr. George Shadford, it appears that success attended the labours of the preachers on the circuit: but the time of changing drew near, which, with Mr. Bardsley, during the life of his mother, was a time of some anxiety.\* He, as well as she herself, was ever desirous of hovering at a moderate distance round home; and to the honour of Mr. WESLEY may it be spoken, that he studied to meet and cherish this feeling as far as circumstances would admit. He wrote to him thus, when appointed for Derbyshire:—

*“ Bristol, August 5, 1771.*

*“ Dear Sammy,*

*“ I had intended you for a more distant circuit, where I believe you would have been exceeding useful.*

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\* One of the most artless and touching monuments of filial affection and respect might have been raised to the memory of this good man, from his different letters and papers, that would have done honour to human nature and to Christianity. The tender solicitude which he manifested for the salvation of his mother is almost inexpressible. Fortunately for these pages, after a variety of transfers from person to person, tithings, burnings, and circuitous routes, those portions of the papers were preserved which alone could throw light on several parts of the History of Methodism in Sheffield, preserved unintentionally, and met

But we can hardly shew tenderness enough to an aged parent. Therefore, for your mother's sake, I will alter my design, and appoint you for the Derbyshire circuit, which you know borders on that of Manchester.

"Take care to walk closely with God, and to exhort others so to do. Be instant in season, and out of season. Encourage all to expect salvation *now*! I am

"Your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY.

"To Mr. Samuel Bardsley, at Mr. James Walker's, in  
"Sheffield."

At the Conference held at Bristol the day after the date of Mr. WESLEY's letter, Messrs. Daniel Bumstead, Garnet, and Moulson, were appointed to labour in the Sheffield circuit,—one preacher more than the year preceding. Mr. WESLEY observes, of this Conference, "We had more preachers than usual, in consequence of Mr. Shirley's circular letter. At ten on Thursday morning he came, with nine or ten of his friends: we conversed freely for about two hours; and, I believe, they were satisfied, that we were not such 'dreadful heretics' as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith."\* This famous circular has often been read by both Methodists and others†, but few of the present race have seen its counterpart; perhaps the one sent to Mr. Bardsley while in Sheffield, is the only one of the originals now forthcoming; and as a curiosity of its kind, a correct copy is here subjoined, to shew the Methodists in Sheffield, the dreadful heresy of which their preachers were suspected, and the due pains taken to correct the evil.

"The DECLARATION of the Rev. JOHN WESLEY and others, concerning the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770. To which is subjoined the

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with by the writer in a way in which they would have been for ever lost to the work, had it not been for a particular providence which led him nearly 200 miles from Sheffield, and the same distance from the place where the papers were first deposited, just at that stage of the History when they became necessary.

\* Journals, vol. v. p. 32.  
p. 221., where it is inserted.

† See Fletcher's Works, vol. ii.



Rev. Mr. Shirley's *acknowledgement* of his *mistake*, concerning those Minutes.

"WHEREAS the doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favour *Justification by Works*: Now, the Rev. JOHN WESLEY and others, assembled in Conference, do declare, That we had no such meaning; and that we *abhor* the doctrine of Justification by Works, as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. And as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, That we have no *trust* or *confidence* but in the *alone merits* of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST for Justification. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) *who doth not good works*, where there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in *meriting* or *purchasing* our Justification from first to last, *either in whole or in part*.

"Signed by the Rev. Mr. WESLEY and fifty-three preachers."

"MR. SHIRLEY'S Christian respects wait on Mr. WESLEY. The Declaration agreed to in Conference, the 8th of Aug., 1771, has convinced Mr. Shirley he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points in the Minutes of the Conference held in London, August 7, 1770; and he hereby wishes to testify the full satisfaction he has in the said Declaration, and his hearty concurrence and agreement with the same.

"Mr. WESLEY is at full liberty to make what use he pleases of this.

"August 10, 1771.

"Bristol: Printed by William Pine, Wine-street."

It is worthy of notice, that Mr. Thomas Olivers stood up in the open Conference, and stood *alone* as the opposer of the above Declaration, refusing to sign his name with Mr. WESLEY and the rest of the brethren, He contended for the expressions employed in the Minutes, and maintained that any concession or alteration would be a triumph gained by the Calvinists, who, he said, had already begun to rejoice. The "*use*,"

however, which Mr. WESLEY made of Mr. Shirley's letter would operate as a check upon every exulting spirit, since it was as widely circulated on a fly sheet.

With regard to the preachers stationed here at the Conference, and whose names are on the Minutes for the year, only two of them entered upon the work. From some cause, or for some reason, now unknown, Mr. Moulson never came to Sheffield; nor can the smallest information be received of him as a travelling preacher, either traditional or historical. Mr. Charles Boon, appointed for the Lincolnshire west circuit, supplied his place. As Mr. Joseph Garnet will receive no further notice, it may be observed, that he entered the Christian ministry as an itinerant in 1768, and died in the work in 1775. Mr. Geo. Robinson writes thus to Mr. WESLEY from Lincolnshire, respecting his death:—  
 “There has been a stir amongst the people ever since that dear man of God, Mr. Joseph Garnet, died at my house. His dying prayers are about to be answered. I think myself highly favoured that I had him five weeks before he died.”\*

The number of members in Society in Sheffield was between two and three hundred; and throughout the circuit, in connexion with the town, six hundred and fifty-two, an increase of fifty-five in the course of the preceding twelve months. This seems to have been one of the most flourishing periods of its minority. There appears a small draw-back on the face of the Minutes for the year, in the grant of £30 : 10 : 6d. to the circuit by the Conference, indicative of considerable pecuniary embarrassment, which, in Methodism, does not always comport with great spiritual prosperity. But this may be accounted for on two grounds; first, on that of an additional preacher, which brought an additional burthen, a burthen which was more than commensurate with the increase of members; and secondly, the taking and furnishing of a house for the superintendent and his family. Till now the preachers took up their residence with the principal friends. A house was taken in the

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\* Meth. Mag. 1787, p. 498. There is also a notice of the manner in which he was brought to God, in the Life of Mr. Hanby, Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 510.

lane leading from the Hartshead, past the front of the Iris-office, into the upper part of High-street. Here it was that the first house stood, and yet stands, entirely appropriated to the use of a Methodist preacher and his family, together with the single brethren who might be on the circuit at the same time. The superintendant had £3 per quarter for himself, £3 per quarter for his wife, 2s.4s. per week board for himself and his family, and 1s. per week for servant's wages and board. On these inconsiderable sums, not less than from five to seven or eight persons had to subsist. Such were the temporal advantages reaped by Methodist preachers, many of whom had left comfortable homes, and any of whom might have earned as much by dint of mere manual exertion; and for these they had to travel from ten to thirty miles frequently in the day, preach every evening in the week and often at five o'clock in the morning, take the same pulpit-exercise three times at least every Lord's day, meet Societies, renew tickets, visit the sick, exposed to all weathers, and frequently the meanest lodgings, and, as the climax of the whole, to sustain the angry browbeatings of the rich, and the stripes and insults of the rude: and yet even this salary was deemed too much by such as never contributed a farthing towards it, and with this they were not unfrequently charged as persons who were courting a life of ease, living upon the public, and fattening on the produce of their office. It was only the year preceding this, that Dr. Johnson said to Boswell, "Whatever might be thought of some Methodist teachers, he could scarcely doubt the sincerity of that man, who travelled nine hundred miles in a month, and preached twelve times a week; for no adequate reward, merely temporal, could be given for such indefatigable labour."\*

Some persons, even among ourselves, who would preserve both Methodism and its preachers in a state of nonage, are fond of expatiating on past scenes, and by an invidious contrast between early and modern times, pour their dissatisfaction into the ears of others. The good sense that prevails in the Methodist body at large,

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\* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. ii. p. 235.

has reduced these croakers to a very slender number; and every little rent experienced carries off a certain portion of them. Let such as are so fond of contrast—so fond of bringing us back to early times, go thither themselves in the wages they receive, in the rents they pay, in the articles they dispose of; and let them consult the whole History of Methodism, especially Mr. Myles's chronological list of the preachers, and they will find that such was the *excessive labour* required from the small number of persons employed, and such the hardships endured, that, with only a few exceptions, human nature absolutely sunk under the fatigue and pressure, and the preachers were either obliged to desist for want of strength for the work, or dropped prematurely into the grave, after labouring only a few years. Very few were able to support it any length of time. They were chiefly those of cooler spirits and iron constitutions, that bore up under the first buffetings of the tempest, and lived to see the receding waves, retiring like the tide into the bosom of an unruffled sea. It is left, also, for the arithmetic of such persons, to calculate whether, in the issue, the excessive labour of five or ten years, will not be exceeded, in substantial usefulness to mankind, by the still more moderate, though far from easy exertions, of from thirty years to half a century. But to return to the narrative.

After Mr. Bumstead had occupied his new residence some time, he removed to a more eligible situation in Pinstone-lane, nearly opposite the New Church. This house was continued some years, and was sufficiently large for the accommodation of the young preachers.

Mr. Fletcher was now nearly in the warmest part of some of his polemical engagements, on certain doctrinal differences which subsisted between the Methodists and the Calvinists; and from the generally agitated state of the two bodies, it gave too much of a controversial tone to the discourses of those of the preachers whose inclination and genius might lead them that way. Mr. Bumstead was one of those men who had entered into the more subtle parts of the controversy; and when his text bore upon any of the main points of difference, he did not hesitate to state his opinion freely, for the sake of settling



the minds of those of his hearers, whose connections led them into the society of persons of opposite sentiments. On one of these occasions, while preaching on, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" &c. \* a person of the name of Samuel Brammer, who had been many years in Society, but had recently joined himself to the Calvinists, stood up in Mulberry-street Chapel, and exclaimed, "That is false doctrine; I will prove it." At such conduct, the congregation was thrown into a state of confusion, and some of the friends were disposed to take proper measures for the purpose of ridding the place of a disturber. "Let him alone, let him alone," said Mr. Bumstead, very calmly; "take no notice of him, he is drunk." After a very short but significant pause, he added, "I do not mean to say that the man is drunk with wine, but he is intoxicated with his opinions:" and then proceeded with his discourse. Brammer felt this, muttered a few words, and sate down. He went to Mr. Bumstead's house next morning, and after cavilling the space of an hour, retired; following him occasionally from place to place, while he was on the circuit, and endeavouring to provoke him to engage in disputation.

It was not only by occasional interruptions, such as Brammer's, and by the assembly of a lawless mob, that Mulberry-street congregation was disturbed, but by the relations of those who had joined Society; thus verifying the truth of that Scripture declaration, "I came not to send peace, but a sword. I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."† The wife of one of the members, of the name of Wood, furnished a practical comment on this text; and such was the virulent spirit she indulged, that the worship of God was frequently disturbed by the rudeness of her behaviour; while at other times she would have stolen her husband's hat out of the chapel, and have suffered him to go home without one. He endured the whole with humility, meekness, and patience; and happy indeed would it have been, if the sequel had, on his own

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\* Jer. viii. 22.

† Matt. x. 34-36.

part, been equal to the commencement. His patient example so affected her, accompanied by the agency of the Spirit of God upon her heart, that she became a truly religious character. No sooner was her enmity slain, than he began to sink into a state of indifference, left the Society, attended chapel occasionally, and never became a member more; thus, while she illustrated the veracity of the word of God, affording an exemplification of the old apologue of the sun and the wind and the traveller. The traveller could not be induced to throw off his outward garment during the tempest; but when the sun arose, and he began to burn under its rays, he soon threw aside his drapery. An instance of a similar kind came under the observation of the writer, in Yorkshire. A young man who lived with his uncle, was greatly persecuted by him for joining the Methodists. The old gentleman threatened to turn him out of doors, and to cross him out of his will. Threatenings and promises were alike useless; the nephew persevered in serving God according to the dictates of conscience, at the hazard of every earthly prospect. By some means the uncle became reconciled to him a little before his death, and left him considerable property. On coming into possession of his uncle's effects, he left the Methodist connexion, and became a complete man of the world. Alas, how many instances have there been of persons braving the storms of adversity and persecution, but who have been melted into a compliance with moral evil as soon as the warm sun of prosperity has shone upon them!

Husbands, on the other hand, who would have deemed it irreverent to behave improperly in any other place of worship, supposed they were authorized to proceed at any length they might judge proper in a Methodist chapel. Hence it was, that females were frequently dragged out of the chapel or ordered home without any ceremony. In this way a good woman of the name of Wilson was often served, and the congregation disturbed. The key of the house, or any other thing, real or imaginary, true or false, was rendered the occasion of giving vent to the enmity of the human heart. It was on a watch-night that her husband availed

himself of the key, an old trick, to throw the congregation into a state of confusion. Mr. Bumstead was engaged in prayer when he shouted out for it, and prayed earnestly that the Lord would grant him "the *key* of knowledge." He asked a question, expressive of his chagrin, and left the chapel.

On the general state of the circuit, the labours, and different routes of the preachers, the following extract of a letter from Mr. Boon to Mr. Bardsley will afford some satisfaction:—

*"Sheffield, Nov. 30, 1771.*

"My dear Brother,

"I sincerely thank you for the many good wishes contained in your last, and pray that the Lord would pour into your soul all the blessings you ask of Him for your friend. May Jesus, the kind Keeper of Israel, ever preserve you, and may you ever be under his guidance. Governed by him, we are in the way to safety, peace, and joy!

"It is a source of gratitude to me, that my lot is cast here; and I am more deeply convinced than ever of the necessity of diligence in the work of the Lord. To do that work as it ought to be done, requires all our strength, and the due improvement of all our time.

"We are free from all distractions. God is truly among us in Sheffield. I have never preached in it one Sabbath-day, without joining some persons to the Society. The congregations are much larger than they were; and at Doncaster, Rotherham, and some other places, they are nearly doubled. It is great encouragement when persons are willing to come and hear the word preached. My fellow-labourers and I are united in love, and we are striving for those things which make for peace, and whereby we may edify one another.

"With regard to some of those after whom you inquire, Mr. Wood, of Denby Dike, has lost his partner and his eldest daughter of a severe fever, and the rest of the family, twelve in number, were all afflicted with it at the same time. The person to whose stable our

horses were wont to go at Shipley\* is dead, and poor F. is extremely ill. The remainder are well in health, but some of the young people, I am afraid, are growing weary in well-doing. I have delivered your message to the children in every place. Mr. Booth has delivered your letters to the Rev. Mr. Hutton, who talks of either writing to you, or of seeing you.

“ Mr. Mat. Mayer has been at Sheffield; his stay was short, and I was unable to see him. Sister Drake, of Sheffield, after whom you inquire, is well, and in a state of religious prosperity. To Mr. James Walker, I am sincerely attached, as well as yourself; together with many others.

“ I cannot furnish you with an accurate plan of the round; but I will give you a slight sketch. In Sheffield, where I find much freedom in speaking, I preach about six times in three weeks. I shall be at Doncaster next Saturday and Sunday; the Sunday after at Rotherham; and the Sunday succeeding that again at Sheffield; at which places I preach every third Sunday; I am at Cantley every sixth Sunday and Monday, and at Whiston every third Tuesday, where there is an increase both of hearers and members. I preach at Rawmarsh also every third Wednesday, at which place the Society is in good earnest, and at Rotherham every third Thursday. We each preach at Sheffield on the week days, Monday and Thursday: and the country preacher takes the Park on a Friday. In the latter place, there are three or four houses in which we preach alternately, and I hope good will be done. All the other places have preaching once a fortnight. I left Sheffield last Tuesday, went to the Bridge†, to Eyam and Hallam, and am now on my way to Doncaster. On the succeeding visit to Doncaster, I shall proceed thither from Hackinthorpe, by way of Whiston. Such is a short sketch of a part of our plan; but I trust in the event of our exchanging a month towards April, according to present arrangements, to give you a fuller account.

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\* A village a few miles from Huddersfield, which formed one of the boundaries of the circuit in that direction.

† Grindleford Bridge.



“ Part of this letter was written at Eyam, and brother and sister Bennison. who were at my right hand at the time, requested me to remember them to you in Christian love.”

In another letter, dated December, Mr. Boon observes, “ We have had two bad cases lately in Sheffield, brothers S. and R. have been two great offenders against both God and man.” Christian Societies ought to be thankful for the smallest prosperity ; but in the midst of all, they have often to be reminded of that salutary caution, “ Rejoice with trembling.”

Mr. Boon began to itinerate in the year 1770, and fell a victim to a rapid atrophy in 1795, in the 45th year of his age. An account of his Christian character and death, both of which may be read with interest, is inserted in the *Methodist Magazine*.\* Mr. Myles fixes the commencement of his itinerancy in 1771, but letters in his own hand-writing prove him to have been stationed in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire prior to his coming into Yorkshire.

The few places noticed by Mr. Boon, form but an inconsiderable part of the number included in the circuit; nor can we ascertain from them the full extent of ground the preachers had to traverse. The circuit at this time extended to the north as far as Hemsworth, a village in the neighbourhood of Pontefract; and to the north-east as far as Thorne.

An old memorandum book of Mrs. Johnson's, of Hoyland, comprising the domestic and other events of this and the year preceding, fell into the hands of the writer, which was perused with interest and curiosity, and was of no small importance in ascertaining dates. A reference was made to particular days, which were devoutly distinguished above others, for particular providential occurrences, exciting the warmest gratitude to God. The texts also, which formed the ground-work of the discourses delivered by Messrs. Woodcock, Bardsley, Bumstead, Boon, Garnet, and others, were distinctly marked, not only as remembrancers, but many

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\* For 1798, pp. 180-183.

of them apparently as pious memorials of the good received under them; a practice carried to its perfection by that man of order and of God, Mr. George Newton, of Stainbro' Lodge, Thorncliffe. The class of texts dwelt upon, form a good criterion of the men and their preaching: they were such texts as, Job xxii. 21, Isa. xlviii. 17, Isa. lx. 21, Jer. xxix. 13, John i. 12--v. 40--viii. 31, 32, Rom. viii. 1, 2, 14--xiii. 12, Gal. vi. 16, Phil. iv. 19. As preachers, they were more experimental and practical, than doctrinal; constantly digging about the heart and lopping off sin from the life; pressing upon the conscience the necessity of the new birth; the high privileges of Christian believers; and urging watchfulness, earnestness, promptitude, and perseverance. It is no wonder that Methodism, or in other words, vital religion, spread as it did, when it had such brave, unsophisticated, apostolic men, to recommend it.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, of Hoyland, continued to entertain the preachers, as their predecessors had done at Barley-Hall and Thribergh, and to feel the influence of that gospel which they approved and supported. While Mrs. Johnson was on a visit to Daventry, seeing her friends, she wrote to her husband in a strain which fully proves that they were conversant with each other on the subject of personal religion. "My dearly beloved husband,—I received your's with great pleasure, and am glad to hear you are all well. Glory be to God for all his mercies! O may we never forfeit his favour by turning aside from the holy commandments given to us, but continue stedfast in the faith, always abounding in the work of the Lord, who hath called us from darkness into his marvellous light!"

Notwithstanding the two cases alluded to by Mr. Boon, considerable prosperity was experienced by the Society in Sheffield, which was visited in the course of the year by Mr. Kershaw and Mr. Pawson.

A providential escape experienced by Mr. Bumstead, in Mulberry-street Chapel, is worthy of being recorded. The love-feast in those days was held on a Monday afternoon, commencing at two o'clock; as was the case some years afterwards, when Norfolk-street Chapel was built. It was during one of these sacred festivals that

some men were employed in repairing a chimney belonging to one of the adjoining houses. The house was much higher than the chapel; and in the immediate neighbourhood of it was a large sky-light, or glass dome, directly over the pulpit. Whether through carelessness, accident, or design, is not known, but a brick fell from the heights on which the men stood, shot through the glass, and just grazed the shoulder of Mr. Bumstead. Had it varied a few inches in its course, it must have fractured his skull in such a way as to render an escape with life next to impossible. The people perceiving that no material injury was sustained, spontaneously burst forth, in the most affecting manner, into a song of praise; employing that verse which is so often sung, and which will live with the world itself, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," &c.

An increase of members rendered additional leaders necessary: and although some of the older leaders are noticed in an earlier page, it may be agreeable to many to know their number at this period, as well as useful in reporting progress. The following, as far as information can be collected, are the names of such official characters, together with their respective places of meeting.

## LEADERS.

## PLACES.

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Henry Alsop met his class in | Cheney-square, afterwards Coalpit-lane. |
| Wm. Beard .....              | Silver-street.                          |
| John Burdett .....           | Pinstone-lane, in the preachers' house. |
| Thomas Grisby.               |   |
| Samuel Hirst.....            | Sims-croft, afterwards Trinity-street.  |
| Wm. Hustler.                 |   |
| Samuel Hemsworth.....        | Broad-lane.                             |
| Joseph Kitchen.....          | Pea-croft.                              |
| Samuel Knutton .....         | Sims-croft.                             |
| John Paramore .....          | Pinstone-lane, preachers' house.        |
| George Smith .....           | Mulberry-street.                        |
| Wm. Tingle .....             | Cheney-square.                          |
| James Walker .....           | Pepper-alley.                           |

Henry Alsop, who stands first in alphabetical order, is also entitled to a first place in respect of age. He has been already noticed as occupier of the preaching-house, which was pulled down by the mob in 1746. He

was a file-smith by trade, and brought up his family by honest industry. In his attachment to the Methodist doctrines, discipline, and mode of worship, he was constant and firm. He was a conscientious man, enjoyed real religion, and was universally respected. His class met in the house of David Parkin, father of the late Jonathan Parkin, one of the travelling preachers. Henry died in Christian triumph, at an advanced age, some time after the erection of Norfolk-street Chapel. Mr. Jonathan Beet met in his class after the year 1780. Very different were the latter days of Joseph Kitchen, who fell from his steadfastness.



## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX,

WITH CORRECTIONS.

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1739. Pages 8, 9.

To the account already given of John Bennet, the following, which Mr. George Morley read in a manuscript life of him, written by himself, may properly be subjoined. On his leaving Mr. Bagshawe, as clerk, he commenced the business of a regular carrier between Sheffield and Macclesfield, and employed a number of pack-horses for the purpose of conveying goods across the moors, over which carts and waggons were unknown to pass, till several years afterwards. When he was engaged in this concern, he was invited, as has been stated, to hear David Taylor preach on Sheffield-moor. Prior to his going to hear David, he had conceived the uttermost contempt of his person and proceedings, though he had never seen him. When he approached the place, such was the concourse of people met on the occasion, that he could not hear a word which was delivered; but on hearing them sing, he was, to employ his own words, "deeply affected with the mere power of sound." He was also, on seeing David, a good deal prepossessed in his favour. At the close of the discourse, J. Bennet's friend signified his intention to leave, and beckoned on him to go; but he appeared deprived of the power, was determined to wait till the end of the service, though he could scarcely assign any reason for such a wish. He became thoughtful, and expressed a desire to have an interview with David. His friend, who was a printer, told him he could soon procure that, as he had been employed to print some things for him; and had an acquaintance with him. Through the instrumentality of Bennet's friend, David and he were brought together; and after conversing some time, he pressed David to go and preach in his father's house, at Chinley, in Derbyshire. David remarked in reply, "I have no objection to go, if it will only be for the glory of God, and the good of souls." "The good of souls!" thought Bennet, "what can that mean?" declaring afterwards, "that he knew as little about his soul as the sole of his shoe." The language was to him perfectly novel, and he began to feel that he had gone too far in asking David to go into Derbyshire, without first

consulting others who were immediately concerned. He took care, therefore, to add, in hope of extricating himself from the engagement, that he would speak to his parents on the subject, and that he should communicate the result to David in the course of a fortnight. The fortnight had nearly rolled on; J. Bennet had returned from Derbyshire; he was afraid to meet David: and resolved that he would not go to see him. It had repeatedly occurred to him in the interval, "What a fool I am! what do I care for this man's preaching! The people in Derbyshire do not want him; my parents do not want him, and know nothing of him." Such thoughts as these harassing his mind, he never once named the circumstance to his parents, nor yet any knowledge of the existence of such a person as the preacher he had heard. David, however, bore in his recollection the engagement, and sent for John Bennet to his warehouse. Being at that moment particularly engaged, he sent back the messenger with the tidings of such engagement, stating that he would wait on Mr. Taylor as soon as business would permit him, hoping at the same time to escape by this method. He put off the visit as long as he could, and till indeed he concluded that David, tired with waiting, would be gone. To his no small mortification, he found David at his post; and when asked the result, "told him," to employ again his own language, "a flat lie,"—that he had asked his parents, and they were willing he should preach in their house. A day was accordingly fixed for the visit; and as Bennet was going across the moors on business, he agreed to meet David at a public-house between Chinley and Sheffield, provided the weather should be favourable. More dissatisfied than before, for involving himself in such difficulties with a man, who, to him, was a perfect stranger, Bennet scarcely knew how to proceed; and, afraid lest David should pay an unexpected visit, only related the circumstance to his parents on the morning of the day on which they were to meet each other at the public-house. The father and mother united in declaring, that no preacher should enter their doors; that they had a very excellent dissenting minister in Mr. Clegg, under whose preaching they sate, and who would be offended with them for introducing a stranger; and that if he persisted in his purpose, they should turn both him and the preacher out of doors. Here was another obstacle thrown in his way; and there was only one relieving consideration, and that was—the unfavourable state of the weather. Still, he was uncomfortable, lest David should cross the rude moors, and there should be no one to give him the meeting. He considered, that as he had been the cause of the journey, it was but his duty to go and see whether he would attend to the appointment. Without informing his parents whither he was going, he



mounted his horse, and when he reached the public-house, rejoiced that no one was there for whom he inquired. The rain continued to pour from the heavens, and he began to delight himself with the persuasion that David would not attempt the journey. His eye was directed towards the window, and it was not long before he saw a person on horseback, wending his way towards the door, and dripping with wet. It was David; J. Bennet's expectations were dashed to the ground in an instant; he knew not what to do; to take him forward to Chinley he was afraid, and to send him back was unfeeling and dishonourable. While in this painful dilemma, a second person rode up to the door, and took shelter from the rain. This gentleman recognized David Taylor, and was happy to see him, having heard him preach once on Sheffield-moor. After a few words were exchanged, he pressed David to accompany him to the village where he resided, and preach to the people. At this J. Bennet was greatly rejoiced, and again hoped that he would obtain an honourable acquittance. David told the gentleman of his previous engagement, but intimated that he was willing to do any thing for the best, and would leave it with them to decide in whatever way it should be most agreeable to themselves. Bennet saw deliverance at hand, and resolved, if he once shook off David, he would never more entangle himself with him. The gentleman continued to urge his request, and Bennet gave him up with as good a grace as circumstances would admit. David and the gentleman commenced their route, and John Bennet returned to the house of his parents with buoyant spirits. Another difficulty, alas! was in the way. Though he had not informed his father and mother whither he was going, they suspected the object of his journey; and on re-considering the subject, they concluded, that, as he had invited the stranger, who, in all likelihood was on his way to Chinley, it would be better to give him at least the appearance of a ready reception. Accordingly, during John's absence, they provided seats and fitted up a room for preaching. This might easily have been surmounted, but in addition to it, they had informed the people through the neighbourhood that a stranger would preach at their house that evening, naming the hour. John had to remount, and set off for David, with slender hopes of securing him, to preserve the credit of his parents. He very fortunately met with David, and succeeded with the gentleman to give him up, as he himself had furnished the example. David arrived at Chinley with his guide, and preached to the people. The next day, being the Sabbath, he preached out of doors at Chapel-en-le-Frith, where he was assailed by a mob, headed by one who ought to have known better. David continued there several days, preaching every evening in the different villages

around, accompanied by John Bennet. During the whole of the time, Bennet's mind was unenlightened by the sermons, and unaffected by grace. At the close of each service, it was customary with David to tell the people, that if any of them had any objections to make to any thing he advanced, he would answer them in private, provided such persons would wait upon him. This, though probably done at first from the best of motives, to secure quiet during public service, led to mere meetings of disputation; and it was through these disputations, when persons attended, not to satisfy scruples of conscience, but merely to cavil, that J. Bennet's mind received Divine light; but it was light without warmth; and he continued to listen, till he became master of David's arguments, and began, even before his heart was effectually changed, to assert and defend the new doctrine. It was not long, however, before he was deeply convinced of his depraved state by nature, and, in an agony of spirit, sought and obtained the remission of his sins.

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1741. Page 13.

There is an error which has found its way into Mr. Hunter's History of Sheffield and Hallamshire, p. 171, which it may be proper to correct. It was not Mr. *Edward*, but Mr. *James* Bennet, that first received the Wesleyan Methodists into Sheffield. James was the father of Edward, and was not a sugar-baker, but a grinder, or employed in some other department of the Sheffield trade. In other parts of this work, where the writer has been guided chiefly by Mr. Hunter, as in pages 34, 43, 45, 56, *James* must be substituted for *Edward*, and in p. 50, the supposition of so early a separation as that suggested, may be omitted by the reader.

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1742. Page 38.

The history of Trembath, as related by a person who was perfectly acquainted with him, is remarkable, and in the contemplation of which, it is difficult to determine whether we ought to feel most of pity or of indignation, or whether a large and equal share of both are not due to him. From the character of a trifler, he fell into that of a tippler; and through some of the heaviest domestic calamities that could befall him as a husband, which chiefly originated in his own misconduct, he sunk still deeper—sunk into the character of a drunkard. After Mr. Wesley had met with him in Cornwall, he was sent for to Ireland by his two sons, who allowed him a proper maintainance during the remain-

der of his life. Mr. Walter Griffith visited him in Cork, about 1793 or 1794, when on his death-bed; but he was far from being sufficiently impressed with either his approaching dissolution, or the sublime realities of an invisible world, so captivating to the real Christian. He laboured under a severe paralytic affection, and might possibly feel more than he could express.

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1743. Page 41.

It may be a matter of curiosity with some to know, the full extent of John Bennet's round. Mr. George Morley was favoured with an outline of it, in his perusal of the MS. life of that good man, as it existed in 1744, and onward. Chinley, in Derbyshire, was head quarters. From thence it went on to Macclesfield, in Cheshire; Burslem, in Staffordshire; Alraham; Chester; Holywell, in Flintshire; passing over the rising town of Liverpool; onward to Whitehaven, in Cumberland; and back to Bolton, in Lancashire, Manchester and Chinley, including many of the intermediate towns and villages. John Bennet kept a regular account of the names of all the persons who met, in what were called *bands* at that period, in the different places. Among these were the names of George Pearson and Samuel Rowbotham, of Macclesfield; Mr. Sims, of Alraham; and David Yates, of Manchester, father of the present Joseph Yates, Esq. a leader in the Methodist Society. Unless a chapel has been built at Alraham, in Cheshire, recently, preaching has been continued in the same dwelling-house from the commencement of Methodism, a period of upwards of *eighty* years.

Pages 43.

The account of the opposition which Mr. Charles Wesley experienced at Thorp, and which belongs to the year preceding that prescribed for it in the History, p. 46, 47, will, together with the demolition of the first preaching-house at Sheffield, be further illustrated. May 25, 1743, says Mr. Charles Wesley, 'In the afternoon I came to the flock in Sheffield, who are as sheep among wolves; the minister having so stirred up the people, that they are ready to tear the Methodists in pieces. At six o'clock, I went to the Society-house, next door to our brother Bennet's. Hell from beneath was moved to oppose us. As soon as I was in the desk, with David Taylor, the floods began to lift up their voice. An officer, in the army, contradicted and blasphemed. I took no notice of him, but sang on. The stones flew thick, striking the desk and the people. To save them, and the house from

being pulled down, I gave out, that I should preach in the street, and look them in the face. The whole army of the alien Chaldeans followed me. The captain laid hold on me, and began rioting; I gave him for answer, 'A Word in Season, or Advice to a Soldier.' I then prayed particularly for His Majesty King George, and preached the gospel with much contention. The stones often struck me in the face. I prayed for sinners, as servants of their master, the devil; upon which the captain ran at me with great fury, threatening revenge for abusing, as he called it, 'The King, his master.' He forced his way through the brethren, drew his sword, and presented it to my breast. I immediately opened my breast, and, fixing my eye on his, and smiling in his face, calmly said, 'I fear God and honour the King.' His countenance fell in a moment; he fetched a deep sigh, and putting up his sword, quietly left the place. He had said to one of the company, who afterwards informed me, 'You shall see if I do but hold my sword to his breast, he will faint away.' So perhaps I should, had I only his principles to trust to; but if at that time I was not afraid, no thanks to my natural courage. We returned to our brother Bennet's, and gave ourselves up to prayer. The rioters followed, and exceeded in outrage all I have seen before. Those at Moorfields, Cardiff, and Walsal, were lambs to these. As there is no king in *Israel*, I mean no magistrate in Sheffield, every man doth as seemeth good in his own eyes." While Mr. Wesley and the congregation were within, the mob formed the design of pulling down the preaching-house. "It was a glorious time," says he, "with us: every word of exhortation sunk deep, every prayer was sealed, and many found the spirit of glory resting upon them." The next day the house was completely demolished, not one stone being left upon another. "Nevertheless," said Mr. Wesley to a friend, "the foundation standeth sure, and our house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This day he again preached in the street, somewhat more quietly than before. In the evening the rioters became more noisy, and threatened to pull down the house in which Mr. Wesley lodged. He went out to them; read the riot act, and gave a suitable exhortation, and they soon afterwards separated, when peace was again restored.

Pages 46, 47.

May 27, Mr. Charles Wesley preached at five o'clock in the morning on these words, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." He observes, "Our hearts were knit together, and greatly comforted:



we rejoiced in hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, who had now delivered us out of the mouths of the lions. David Taylor informed me, that the people of Thorp, through which we should pass, were exceedingly mad against us. So we found them as we approached the place, and were turning down the lane to Barley-Hall. The ambush rose, and assaulted us with stones, eggs, and dirt. My horse flew from side to side, till he found his way through them. They wounded David Taylor in the forehead, and the wound bled much. I turned back, and asked, what was the reason that a clergyman could not pass without such treatment. At first the rioters scattered, but their captain rallying them, answered with horrid imprecations and stones. My horse took fright, and turned away with me down a steep hill. The enemy pursued me from afar, and followed shouting. Blessed be God, I received no hurt, only from the eggs and dirt. My clothes indeed abhorred me, and my arm pained me a little from a blow I received at Sheffield." See *Charles Wesley's Life*, pp. 153, 156.

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1749. Page 84.

Mr. Whitfield was in these parts at this time. "At Leeds," it is remarked, "the congregation consisted of above 10,000 souls. Thither he was invited by the Rev. Mr. Wesley's ministers, and also by the Societies. And the Rev. Charles Wesley announced him from the pulpit. The season being too far advanced, he did not proceed to Scotland, but returned to London, having preached thirty times in Yorkshire; in Cheshire and Lancashire ten. He was also at Sheffield and Nottingham. The congregations were mostly peaceable and attentive, only in one or two places he was rudely treated." *Seymour's edition of Dr. Gillies' Life of Whitfield*, pp. 110-113.

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1750. Page 87.

In the early part of the summer of 1750, Mr. Whitfield again visited Sheffield and its vicinity. "He went," says his biographer, "to Rotherham and Sheffield. And at the end of May was at Leeds." Mr. Whitfield himself remarks relative to this journey, and in reference to Yorkshire, "Methinks I am now got into another climate, where there are many of God's people." See *Life*, p. 116.

## 1752. Page 89.

No less happy was Mr. Whitfield in his journey of 1752, than in that of 1750. He writes thus to a friend from Sheffield, November 1st,—“Since I left Newcastle, I have scarce known sometimes, whether I have been in heaven or on earth. At Leeds, Birstal, Howarth, Halifax, &c. thousands and thousands have flocked twice or thrice a day to hear the word of life. I am now come from Bolton, Manchester, Stockport, and Chinley. Yesterday I preached in a church. Four ordained ministers, friends of the work of God, have been with me. The word has run so swiftly at Leeds, that friends are come to fetch me back, and I am now going to Rotherham, Wakefield, Leeds, York, and Epworth. God favours us with weather; and I would fain make hay whilst the sun shines. O that I had as many tongues, as there are hairs upon my head! the ever-loving, ever-lovely Jesus should have them all! Fain would I die preaching.” See *Life*, p. 123.

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## 1753. Page 93.

Sheffield appears to have been favoured with a regular succession of visits from Mr. Whitfield, with shorter intervals of time between than at any other period of his public ministry. “He preached at Leicester, Nottingham, and Sheffield,” it is said, “multitudes every where flocking like doves to their windows, to receive the word of eternal life. In his way to Leeds, he preached at Rotherham and Wakefield; at the former place, he had met with such opposition from the mob, that he almost resolved to preach there no more. But he was now convinced of the rashness of such a step; for some who had been bitter persecutors, now gladly received him within their doors, acknowledging that God had made him instrumental in their conversion.” See *Life*, p. 127.

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## 1756. Page 100.

Writing from Sunderland, Aug. 14, 1756, Mr. Whitfield again remarks, “How swiftly doth my precious time fly away! It is now a fortnight since I came to Leeds; in, and about which, I preached eight days, thrice almost every day, to thronged and affected auditories. On Sunday last, at Bradford, in the morning, the auditory consisted of about ten thousand; at noon, and in the evening, at Birstal, to near double the number. Though hoarse, I was helped to speak so, that all heard. Next morning I took a sorrowful leave of Leeds; preached at Doncaster at noon,

and at York the same night." See *Life*, p. 160: On his return from Scotland to London, in September, it is said, "He stopped at Leeds, and went some time into good Mr. G—— and J——'s round, preaching to great multitudes on the mountains." From the term "round" being employed, which was peculiar to Methodism in those days,—from the initials G. and J.—from a knowledge of the fact, that Mr. Grimshaw's *round* extended from Howarth, through Leeds, and southward to within six or seven miles of Sheffield,—from a pretty well grounded belief that Mr. Jaco was then in the *Leeds round*, which included Sheffield, — and lastly, from Mr. Whitfield's intimacy with Mr. Grimshaw, and his increasing union with the Methodist body, it is fair to infer that he chiefly confined his labours to the Wesleyan field, and that, on his route to London, Sheffield was once more favoured with his powerful ministry.

After Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Charles Wesley preached here. He had not visited these parts for some years. He observes on the occasion, "I delivered my soul, and the people seemed awakened and alarmed. I spake plainly and lovingly to the Society, on continuing in the church: and though many of them were Dissenters and Predestinarians, none were offended." See *Life*, p. 247. The object of this tour was, to prevent a separation from the Established Church, of which there were some grounds of fear in different parts of the Connexion; exhorting them to abide wherein they were called. It is very probable that both Methodists and Dissenters understood his meaning, and hence there was no just cause of offence; for by advising such as belonged to the Church to continue in it, he in effect urged the Dissenters to continue in their respective meetings and churches. He wished the Methodists especially, with whom he was immediately connected, not to break off from their former connections, by uniting into a separate party. In doing this he sometimes mentioned the Dissenters, as well as the members of the Church of England, but not always, as in most places these formed the bulk of the Methodist Societies.

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1758. Page 125.

The likeness of George Wainwright affixed to the present work, bears, with the addition of deeper characters of age, a strong resemblance to that of Schwansfelder's, and was recognized by all who knew him in his latter days. The right side of the face was enlarged; his head being generally reclined or drooping, through extreme weakness, and the side of his face pressing upon the right

shoulder. His daughter was obliged to support his head while his features were in the act of being sketched.

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1760. Page 146.

When Mr. Walter Griffith was in the Bath circuit, in 1800, Mr. Gibbs occasionally superintended a workhouse at Warminster. He was a man of low stature, and was then far advanced in life. Persons filling the office which he sustained, generally find all the grace they possess necessary in the discharge of their duty. Being rather of a sharp spirit, he was not unfrequently severely tried. He occasionally officiated as a local preacher. Before his death, he experienced a deeper baptism of the Spirit of God, and finished in peace.

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1762. Page 167.

Nottingham and Leicester were in the Sheffield circuit in 1762. At the former place lived Mr. Matthew Bagshaw, one of the first Methodists, and a local preacher. There was then preaching in a private dwelling in Narrow Marsh. For the better accommodation of a greater number of people, an aperture was made in the ceiling, and two or three planks were taken up, belonging to the second floor, during service, the room serving the purpose of a gallery. From this place, Matthew was committed by the Mayor to the House of Correction, and thither the whole congregation went with him, considering themselves equally culpable in encouraging conventicles. No sooner were they lodged within the walls, than they began to sing and pray, to the annoyance of the keeper, who lodged a complaint against them to that effect to the Mayor. Orders were given to discharge them; and as it was at the instance of the Mayor, they left: but there was no authority for the release of the preacher; and a Quaker continued with him, declaring that he would not quit the place till he was discharged; in consequence of whose firmness Matthew was set at liberty.

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1765. Page 198.

"It will be expected that we should not pass over altogether in silence, a Mr. Bryan (Bryant), who preached at Jewry-street, along with Mr. Aldridge, during the early part of his ministry in that place. This gentleman was a native of Yorkshire, and pursued his studies for the ministry in the Countess of Huntingdon's College, at Trevecca. It seems he did not itinerate long in that



connexion. Erasmus, a Greek bishop, having visited London in 1763, laid his hands upon several persons who could not procure ordination from the English bishops. Mr. Bryan being desirous of episcopal ordination, applied to him for that purpose, and easily obtained it. After this, he became minister of a congregation at Sheffield. Having contracted an acquaintance with Mr. Aldridge while at College, it was afterwards maintained by a mutual correspondence; and when Mr. Aldridge settled at Jewry-street, Mr. Bryan constantly spent three months of the year in London, preaching in the pulpit of his friend, who, during the interval, supplied the chapel at Sheffield. Mr. Bryan was afflicted for many years, at intervals, with an unhappy dejection of spirits, which bordered upon derangement. To such a height did his disorder sometimes proceed, that he has attempted, in the frenzy of despair, to make away with himself. Nevertheless, his friends considered him to be a truly good man, and he was enabled, continually, to overcome the temptations of the adversary. He died many years ago, and was buried under his own pulpit at Sheffield."—*Private information.* See *Wilson's "History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting-Houses, in London, Westminster, and Southwark."* Vol. I. p. 132.

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1770. Page 232.

On Monday, Nov. 5, 1770, the affecting news of Mr. Whitfield's death arrived in London, by the Boston Gazette, and also by the letters of several correspondents to their friends. He died on the 30th of the September preceding, at Newbury Port, near Boston, New England. The tidings of his death spread over the kingdom, and were severely felt at Sheffield and Rotherham, at both of which places were to be found the fruits of his ministry. Mr. Keen, of London, had often asked Mr. Whitfield, "If you should die abroad, who shall we get to preach your funeral sermon? Must it be your old friend, the Rev. John Wesley?" His constant answer was, "He is the man." Mr. Keen waited on Mr. Wesley, on the Saturday following, and he promised to preach it on the Lord's day, Nov. 18, which he did, to an extraordinarily crowded and mournful auditory; many hundreds being compelled to depart, who could not possibly obtain admission. In the London Chronicle for the 19th, it was observed, "Yesterday the Rev. John Wesley preached a funeral sermon on Mr. Whitfield's death, in the morning, at Tottenham-court Chapel; and in the evening, at the Tabernacle: the inside of each place was lined with black cloth, and an escutcheon hung on the pulpits. The multitudes that went to hear the sermon exceeded

all belief. The chapel and tabernacle were both filled as soon as they were opened."

Mr. Whitfield was governed by a disinterested concern for the immortal welfare of his fellow-creatures;

"And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,  
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

June 18 1841  
North May 1841 1/2 60

# **WESLEYAN METHODISM**

**IN**

**MANCHESTER.**



***PART FIRST***

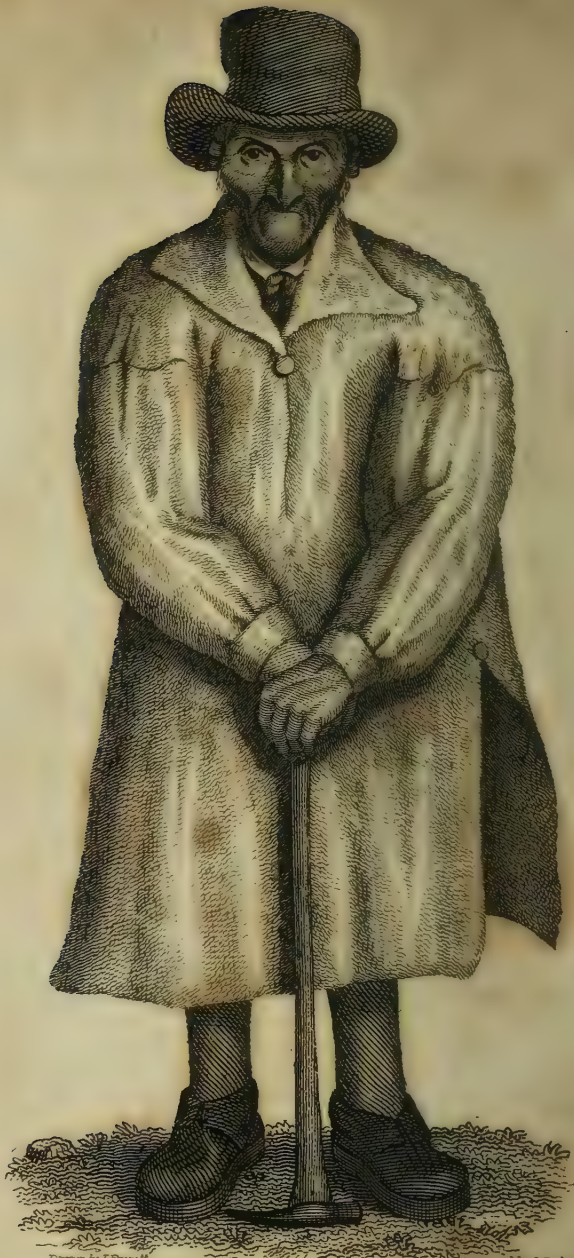
**OF**

**VOL. I.**









RICHARD BRATLEY AGED 90.

*The Plate presented to the Rev. J. Everett, for his Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism, in Manchester & its Vicinity by W. John Bratley*

# Wesleyan Methodism

IN

## MANCHESTER

AND

*ITS VICINITY.*



BY JAMES EVERETT.

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"Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness."

MOSES.

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VOL. I.



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1827.





TO  
**THE REVEREND ADAM CLARKE,**

*L. L. D. F. A. S. M. R. I. A. &c. &c.*

AUTHOR OF A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON

*THE SACRED WRITINGS*

OF

**THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT,**

*&c. &c.*

**THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED;**

---

*IN THE HOPE*

THAT THE INTEREST HE KINDLY MANIFESTED IN ITS COMPOSITION  
WILL NOT BE DIMINISHED BY ITS PUBLICATION;

---

THAT THE SCENES WHICH IT PROFESSES TO DESCRIBE, AND THE PEOPLE  
IT ATTEMPTS TO POURTRAY, WILL AWAKEN SOME PLEASING RE-  
MINISCENCES, WHEN CONTEMPLATED IN CONNEXION WITH  
HIS OWN MINISTERIAL EXERTIONS, (HE HAVING  
ITINERATED ON THE GROUND BOTH IN THE  
PRIME OF LIFE AND IN MELLOW AGE;)

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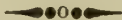
THAT IT WILL NOT BE FOUND OF AN UNCONGENIAL CHARACTER WITH  
HIS OWN NARRATIVE OF THE WESLEY FAMILY;

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AND THAT HE WILL ACCEPT IT AS A MEMORIAL OF SINCERE RESPECT  
AND FRIENDSHIP.



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## P R E F A C E .



“Do not neglect the society of old men: their memories are furnished with many facts which they witnessed, and which make them repositories well worth examining. They resemble old books, that contain excellent matter, though badly bound, dusty and worm-eaten.” Such was the counsel of Ganganelli to a young monk; and the predilection of the author of the following pages, in favour of the ancients of the house of Israel, long before Ganganelli’s Letters were read by him, was such as to render, in his own case, this counsel unnecessary.

It has long been the opinion of the author,—that there has rarely been a work of God, since the apostolic age, more worthy an *Ecclesiastical History*, than that which has been exhibited in the christian world, under the denomination of METHODISM,—and that a general history can only be formed from such *local details* as are here presented, and which similar publications profess to furnish.

An ardent wish was not unfrequently indulged, while prosecuting the “*Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield, and its Vicinity*,” that the subject of local histories might be taken up in other parts of the kingdom—though, at that time, without the most distant hope it would ever engage the same pen. It so happened, however, that during the progress of the second volume of that work through the press, a variety of concurring circumstances led the writer to fix his residence in Manchester. This, exclusive of other considerations, in which another hand besides his own was conspicuous, appeared to be an additional link in the chain of those providences which contributed to the furtherance of his original design. Had his removal taken place at an earlier period, his collections for the Sheffield department would have been rendered incomplete; and had he been a few months later, he would have been deprived of the privilege of an interview with some *living oracles*, who, as in the case of some of the venerable worthies consulted in reference to his “*Sketches*,” went the way of all flesh soon after they were visited; among whom may be noticed John

Shore, of Ardwick, who died in the 83d. year of his age, and another person in the neighbourhood of New Mills, Derbyshire, who reached a 105, admirably pairing with old George Wainwright, who was born in the same county, and only exceeded him two years.

The “Historical Sketches” being the *first work* of the kind in Methodism, the hazard of a failure became of course the greater, from the circumstance of the writer having the whole of the interest to create, relative to such a subject. It was not long before he was indulged with the satisfaction of seeing the path which he had struck out, entered by others; and he trusts that the spirit which has been awakened, will never be permitted to slumber, till every circumstance and document, worth preserving, illustrative of the providence and grace of God, shall have been recovered. Had such a plan been adopted in the early ages of the christian church, it would have opened a new source of profit and of pleasure to all succeeding generations; and it is to such omission, that much of the meagreness of early Ecclesiastical History, is to be attributed. This remark, the reader will view as perfectly distinct from any reference to the manner in which the writer has executed his plan. Of that, others must decide.

Mr. George Whitfield perceiving the necessity of something of the kind, “Had formed a design,” says Cornelius Winter, in his personal biography to Mr. Jay, “of writing the history of Methodism, but never entered upon it.” Mr. Wesley proceeded still further, for he incorporated an account of the rise and progress of Methodism, into his Ecclesiastical History: but that account, in addition to its extreme brevity, does not profess to furnish any materials for history for some considerable time before his death; while much that has transpired since the period of its publication, remains untold.

The publications to which the predecessor of the present work has given rise, and to which allusion has been made, are all useful—whatever their magnitude or their merit, inasmuch as they are calculated to promote the grand object, and to preserve alive the spirit of research; the least of them bearing the proportion, and sustaining the importance of those drops which go to augment the size and increase the impetuosity of the stream. The Preachers, impressed with the importance of the subject, entered upon the Minutes of the first Conference after the publication of the “Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield, and its Vicinity” an “order” for the accomplishment of the general design; the order stating, that “Every Superintendent is di-

rected to collect all the information which it may be in his power to obtain, respecting the introduction of Methodism into the principal places in his circuit; which information he shall bring with him to the next Conference, to be disposed of as shall then be determined." This was in 1823, and upon this, several of the brethren acted. To give efficacy to the "order" of Conference, the Rev. Thomas Jackson, Editor of the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," not only admitted reviews of separate local histories, but gave, in 1825, a prominence to the subject, which it had not attained, and which, for want of collections and time for arrangement, it could not possibly receive before. Hence, on viewing the labours of the year, in the preface, he had occasion to remark, "The papers on the rise and progress of Methodism in different parts of the United Kingdom, to which we have given publicity in the present Volume, constitute, in our apprehension, not only a *new* but also a very interesting feature in this work. Such accounts will preserve to posterity the names of many of the early Methodists who were distinguished by their active zeal in the cause of Christ, and by the patient endurance of persecution for his sake; and will also form a record of several interpositions of Providence, in behalf of suffering individuals, and for the furtherance of divine truth and grace."

The first separate publication that appeared after the author's "Historical Sketches" was, "A Sketch of Methodism in Halifax and its Vicinity, from its commencement in the year 1741 to 1824," with a quaint but significant motto, "*Better late than never*, by W. Hatton." This was succeeded by "A Concise History of the First Establishment of Wesleyan Methodism in the City of Norwich, in the year 1754, with its progress from that period to its State" in 1825. The year following, 1826, beheld "A History of Methodism in the Town and Neighbourhood of Great Yarmouth, including Biographical Sketches of some of the Leading Characters who" had "been among the Methodists in that Place." For the author to have been able to look out from his comparative retirement, and to observe the progress of research and achievement, from the first day that he put his pen to paper, to the last collection made by others, has more than compensated him for his share of the toil, and was such an expression of approval—however indirect, as he could not have anticipated in so short a period.

A peculiarity of view has led to the indulgence of those things which others have deprecated as evils, and have therefore avoided. The writer of one of the aforesaid local histories "Soon found it necessary, in order to keep both the size and price of the book within narrow limits,

to suppress many things, and to relate others as concisely as possible." It is the opinion on the other hand, of the author of these pages, that to "suppress" any thing of *importance* would be an injury both to the present generation, and to generations yet to come; and that should the things be *unimportant*, no apology is necessary, since their insertion rather than their omission, would require the pen of the apologist. A local history being chiefly intended for the neighbourhood in which the scene is laid, every thing in *that* neighbourhood becomes interesting, which is worthy of notice, and therefore ought—as both time and place demand, to be registered. These pages having been contemplated and written with a view to aid the general historian,—should such an one be held in reserve by providence, particular attention has been paid to general usefulness, as well as local gratification. It is the office of the general historian more especially to *suppress*, and of the local historian to *preserve*,—denying neither of them the right of selection—and proceeding on the supposition that the "things" in question demand attention, which alone can form the basis of apology. That which is not *now* preserved,—providence perhaps furnishing the last opportunity of securing its stores and benefitting by them, may be lost for ever. In several instances, the author has been some months too late in his applications, the fire having been previously applied to letters and other documents, which the "order" of Conference, promptly acted upon by persons in the neighbourhood, might have preserved. Not any particulars have been suppressed in the present instance, which have been deemed worthy of being recorded, and that for this reason,—because they were believed to be so. Others may differ from the author; and these are at liberty to reject what they please; but it is because of such insertion, that the power of rejection is conferred, which, while it is humiliating to the one, ought to remind the other from whence the privilege is derived.

Another of the writers in question has "Conscientiously avoided inserting any thing on mere hear-say." In this instance too, it has been the misfortune of the present author to be obliged from age, as well as inclination, to listen to the "hear-say" tales of "olden times." He has ever considered published accounts the common property of the public, and has only resorted to them for the sake of connexion and illustration; while his great solicitude has been, to secure well authenticated traditional information, in order to place it in a permanent form. Had he, however, shut his *ears*, and only attended to that of which he was an *eye*-witness, he would, by confining himself to the narrow circle of his own personal observation, not only have moved onward



like an oyster in its shell, but would have deprived his readers of some of the most interesting portions of his pages. Though it is one of those cases in which "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom," it is still not one in which those who "Are but of yesterday, and know nothing," are prohibited from recording what the negligence of riper years has omitted to transcribe. The term "hear-say" is so equivocal, that it is difficult to understand what is meant by it. There is a sense in which the best authenticated facts are only "hear-say" to the million, as well as the most important traditional knowledge, the truth of which being capable only of being established by the few: and the very facts recorded by the historian, who may have himself been an eye-witness, become but "hear-say" tales when related to a fourth or fifth person; and will not, in every instance, be credited by the hearer, though delivered on the testimony of the writer. If, on the contrary, "hear-say" relations refer to such circumstances or events as are not founded in fact, and with which it must be taken for granted the *historian* has nothing to do, the very act of anticipating and obviating such unpreferred allegation, is unnecessary, and more befitting the novelist than the grave historian. The author, therefore, threw open both ears, and gratefully listened to every old gentleman and every old lady that crossed his path, and availed himself of all the information which he could obtain both from his equals in age and those who lived before he was born, confident that many of them were as much the eye and ear-witnesses of what was orally delivered, as the historian might have been of what he transmitted from his own eye to the sheet of paper before him. But still, though age and distance reduced him to the necessity of listening to others, and of occasionally recording what had been penned and published, he received nothing without examination, and wrote nothing without a conviction of its truth.

In addition to the venerable oral chroniclers just noticed, the author has to acknowledge the obligations under which he has been laid, by communications from the Rev. John Collins, of Frodsham,—Dr. Townley, of London,—the Rev. Charles Ratcliffe, of Haworth,—the Rev. John M'Owan, of Oldham,—the Rev. Robert Miller, of Darlington,—Mr. John Stonehouse, of Manchester,—Mr. Abel Wilson, of Stockport,—Mr. Hitchen, of Alpraham,—Mr. T. Bowers, of Chester,—Mrs. Tindale, of Derby,—and several others, who have furnished letters and other hitherto unpublished documents,—all of which have essentially aided the work. Though brevity compels him to pass over

the names of many from whom favours have been received, a deep sense of the obligation is not the less felt.

“Methodism in Manchester &c.” it may be remarked, connects with “Methodism in Sheffield, and its Vicinity,” the one taking up the subject, nearly in the centre of Derbyshire, where the other leaves off; and both passing over a track of country, in a direct line from east to west, extending from Epworth in Lincolnshire to Liverpool in Lancashire, embracing, in its width, from north to south, a distance of from fifty to sixty miles. Six additional hands, occupying the same extent of territory, will go a great way towards accomplishing the “order” of Conference, and of completing that which is so desirable to all, and so difficult in execution—till tried. But those who would enter upon the work, will find it necessary to abandon what, in composition, may be deemed, both by themselves and others, loftier pursuits, and, in the language of Spencer, to Shepherds a little more elevated than genuine and extended usefulness would warrant, to

“COME DOWN and *learn* the little what  
That Thomalin can *sain*.”

Exclusive of the utility of local history, as a basis on which to raise a superstructure of a more general nature, and of the reasons assigned in the preparatory remarks to the “Sketches,” there are other advantages peculiar to such a work as the present. The observations of a masterly writer, on the feelings and operations of the mind in the contemplation of other things, will not be altogether irrelevant here. “When from the summit of some lofty mountain, we survey the wide extended landscape; though highly delighted, we feel ourselves bewildered and overwhelmed by the profusion and diversity of beauties which nature spreads around us. But when we enter the detail of nature: when we attend the footsteps of a friend through some favoured, beautiful spot, which the eye and the mind take in at once; feeling ourselves at ease, with undivided, undistracted attention we contemplate the whole, we examine and arrange the parts; the imagination is indeed less expanded, but the heart is more gratified; our pleasure is less violent and tumultuous, but it is more intense, more complete, and continues much longer; what is lost in respect of sublimity, is gained in perspicuity, force, and duration.” The same writer proceeds, on individual biography, “It is highly gratifying to find ourselves in the midst of a public assembly of agreeable people of both sexes, and to partake of the general cheerfulness of benevolence. But what are the cheerfulness and benevolence of a public assembly, compared to the

endearments of friendship, and the meltings of love? To enjoy these, we must retire from the crowd, and have recourse to the individual. In like manner, whatever satisfaction and improvement may be derived from general histories of mankind, which we would not be thought by any means to depreciate; yet the history of particular persons, if executed with fidelity and skill, while it exercises the judgment less severely, so it fixes down the attention more closely, and makes its way more directly and more forcibly to the heart." The reader will experience no difficulty in applying the leading particulars in these quotations to the subject in hand, and may possibly find that compensation in minute detail—which minutiae the character of the work absolutely requires, for that want of the majesty of history, of which all such works must necessarily—from their very plan, be deprived.

The author would conclude these remarks, in the language of the sprightly Thomas Fuller, who was as little disposed to suffer his readers to sleep, as to nod himself. "Next to religion," says he, treating on the study of history, "there is nothing that accomplisheth a man more than learning: and if you are afraid to hurt your tender hands with thorny school-questions, there is no danger in meddling with history, which is a velvet study, and a work of recreation. What a pity it is to see a gentleman to have such a crick in his neck, that he cannot look backwards! Yet no better is he who cannot see behind him the actions which long since were performed. History maketh a young man to be old, without either wrinkles or grey hairs; privileging him with the experience of age, without either its infirmities or inconveniences. It not only maketh things past to be present, but it enableth one to make a rational conjecture concerning things to come. For this world affordeth no new accidents, but in the same sense in which we speak of a new moon: which is the old one in another shape, and no other than that which hath been formerly. Old actions return again, furbished over with some new and different circumstances."

JAMES EVERETT.

Manchester, July 4th, 1827,





## CHAPTER I.

*General remarks on the state of Religion—An itinerant ministry—Manchester the scene of Missionary labours—The Rev. J. Wesley, his acquaintance with the Rev. J. Clayton—The origin of Methodism—Mr. Clayton's removal from Oxford—Mr. Wesley visits Mr. Clayton at Manchester—An attack on horse races—Mr. John Byrom—Dr. Burton—Mr. Wesley goes to Georgia, returns to England, and again visits Manchester—The first Methodist Society in Manchester—The Rev. George Whitfield's visit to the town.*

AT the period assigned for the commencement of the present work, Christianity was much more clearly defined in the *letter* than comprehended in the *spirit*, and might not unaptly—to a certain extent at least, be assimilated to a body without a soul. This was especially the case in England, and is admitted by writers both in the Establishment and among the Dissenters. The ministerial character was more distinguished for its learning than for its simplicity and fervid zeal; and this destitution of two of the essential components of general usefulness, occasioned by a want of experimental religion, left the ministers themselves in the attitude of a priest officiating at an altar without a fire. Dreadfully afraid of every thing which assumed a puritanical aspect, from a knowledge of its odiousness to the higher powers, the sermons of many of the clergy became little else than polished harangues on moral virtue, and were more frequently illustrated by quotations from the sages of Greece and of Rome, than by numerous and pertinent references to the only correct standard of faith and practice. Though man was beheld and instructed by his fellow man, as a subject of the moral governor of the universe, and of the civil polity of his country, yet religious duties were explained and enforced in such a way as to leave the brute heart of the lower orders untouched, and to resolve the devotions of the higher classes of society into a system of imperfect and frigid morality. While the episcopalian, by a partial concealment of the great necessity of an atonement, together with the fatal malady of sin, and the impotency of man in consequence

of that sin, introduced a kind of intermediate scheme, under the supposition that religious services—however imperfect—however blended with occasional frailties,—frailties, inseparable from human nature, would eventually interest the divine clemency and secure the divine favour, the descendants of the old presbyterians beheld religion in the light of a diminutive satellite to the world of moral and eternal interests, and useful only for the purpose of throwing a few rays upon that part of it on which the solar light of human reason never shone—thus reducing the whole of the doctrines of the gospel to a scheme scarcely distinguishable from a system of ethics. In the one case, good works—though a misnomer by the way, were introduced as auxiliaries in the work of reconciliation, and in the other, the offence of the cross had entirely ceased. But notwithstanding this general declension in religion, there were a number of able defenders of the Protestant faith against the errors of the Church of Rome, and of Christianity against the avowed and covert attacks of Infidelity; on both of which accounts, their writings—particularly those of the clergy, are justly held in high estimation. Had the same minute attention been paid to the internal as to the external evidences of Christianity, and the same ardour been evinced in their enforcement and spread, Britain, ere this, had been as the garden of the Lord. But alas, it never seemed to enter into the calculations of many of them, that while human eloquence and human learning might be laudably and energetically employed in defending the outworks of Christianity, the full sway of simplicity and truth could alone defend the citadel. From such lamentable defects in the christian ministry, but slender improvement could be expected in public morals. The heart must be assailed, in order to effect any thing characteristic of purity in the life. The woodman, who enters the forest with a view to fell the timber, never thinks of amusing himself with the uppermost twigs; he aims a blow at the root; and by thus interrupting the sources of circulation, at once deprives it of vegetable life and lays it prostrate.

Such was the general state of the church, the ministry, and public morals when the Wesleys and Whitfield arose to bless mankind. Afflicted with a spirit of apathy within, and profanity without, extraordinary exertions were absolutely necessary to restore to the Establishment the character of a Reformed Church: and Mr. Southey, in his life of Mr. Wesley, does not concede too much to the subject of his memoir, when he affirms, “That he awakened a spirit of

religion, not only in his own community, but in a church which needed something to rouse it." To effect this in every instance, a stated ministry is not unfrequently found inefficient: an itinerant ministry is very often summoned into existence in the order of providence, to fulfil its purposes. Nothing short of ardent zeal, originating in deep piety of heart, will effect many of those erratic movements exemplified in the lives of christian teachers; and that which gives birth to the plan, blesses it in its operation. The Apostles were commissioned to disciple all nations—their immediate successors were distinguished for their outgoings—and missionaries in every age, as their name and their office import, have evinced the same spirit and pursued the same line of conduct.

As some particular cities and districts are distinguished above others, owing to their antiquity, their scenery, or their alliance with the arts and sciences, and attract the gaze as well as receive the imprint of the traveller's foot, so there are some particular places more distinctly marked as the scenes of Missionary labours than others. Whatever may be advanced on this head, in reference to the Mancunium of the ancients, the Manchester of the moderns has not remained unvisited by those birds of passage—the Missionaries, in their migrations from place to place. The venerable Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, not satisfied with preserving his own plot of ground in a state of high cultivation, felt, in the spirit of a true missionary, an ardent desire to send the ploughshare through the wastes, and for the express purpose of ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, made an annual tour through the counties of Northumberland, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire.\* The celebrated George Fox, to whom the Society of Friends owe their religious existence, was in the strictest sense a Missionary; and in one part of his Journal notices his having been "among the professors of Duckenfield and Manchester:"† and Manchester is recorded as one of the most early places in which the ministerial voices of Messrs. Wesley and Whitfield were raised, before they commenced their more public career.

But long anterior to Methodism acquiring any fixity of character, and even prior to Mr Wesley's appearing in Manchester, it had been quietly introduced into the town under the unsuspecting garb of a regular clergyman; and

\* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 373, 415; and Middleton's Evangelical Biography, Vol. 2, p. 202.

† Journal, folio edition of 1765, p. 11, 12.



its calm introduction was the more singular, because it was the garb in which it made its appearance in Oxford, and because of the prominency it assumed by means of the very gentleman by whom it was imported. The *first* person upon whom the *name* can be legitimately fastened, is the Rev. JOHN CLAYTON, of Brazen-nose-college, afterwards successively Chaplain and Fellow of the Old Church, in Manchester. Various attempts have been made, both in the College Library and elsewhere, to obtain something in the shape of a memoir of this worthy man, but every effort has proved fruitless; and the notices of his early history are scattered and brief, as they appear on the pages of Mr. Wesley—and yet, though brief—so much in his favour, that they come over us like gleams of sunshine.

He was born in the year 1709, and became acquainted with Mr. Wesley in the spring of 1732\*. The latter, in a letter to the father of Mr. Morgan, observes, “Your son was now at Holt; however, we continued to meet at our usual times, though our little affairs went on but heavily without him. But at our return from Lincolnshire, in September last, we had the pleasure of seeing him again, when, though he could not be so active with us as formerly, yet we were exceeding glad to spend what time we could in talking and reading with him. It was a little before this time my brother and I were at London, when going into a bookseller’s shop (Mr. Rivington’s in St. Paul’s Church-yard) after some other conversation, he asked us whether we lived in town? and upon our answering, ‘No, at Oxford:’ ‘Then gentlemen,’ said he, ‘let me earnestly recommend to your acquaintance a friend that I have there, Mr. Clayton of Brazen-nose.’ Of this, having small leisure for contracting new acquaintance, we took no notice for the present. But in the spring following (April 20) Mr. Clayton meeting me in the street, and giving Mr. Rivington’s service, I desired his company to my room, and then commenced our acquaintance. At the first opportunity I acquainted him with our whole design, which he immediately and heartily closed with: and not long after, Mr. M. having then left Oxford, we fixed two evenings in a week to meet on, partly to talk upon that subject, and partly to read something in practical divinity. The two points, whercunto by the blessing of God, and your son’s help, we had before attained, we endeavoured to hold fast: I mean, the doing what good

\* Wesley’s Works, Vol. I. p. 134. 8vo. edit.



we can, and in order thereto communicating as often as we have opportunity.”\*

No sooner had Mr. Clayton united himself to the infant society in Oxford, than it felt the benefit of his influence, for “two or three of his pupils” † followed his example, which is highly complimentary of the devotional spirit with which he endeavoured to imbue their minds: and his counsel seems to have been as much respected as his conduct had been influential. Mr. Wesley, in the letter referred to, observes, “To these”—that is, to the “two points” already gained, “by the advice of Mr. Clayton, we have added a third, the observing the fasts of the church; the general neglect of which we can by no means apprehend to be a lawful excuse for neglecting them. And in the resolution to adhere to these, and all things else which we are convinced God requires at our hands, we trust we shall persevere, till he calls us to give an account of our stewardship. As for the names of Methodists, Supererogation-men, and so on, with which some of our neighbours are pleased to compliment us, we do not conceive ourselves to be under any obligation to regard them, much less to take them for arguments. To the law and to the testimony we appeal, whereby we ought to be judged.” The man who could give such advice as that proposed by Mr. Clayton, could be no ordinary character in the work of self-denial; and the esteem in which his judgment was held by Mr. Wesley, will be abundantly attested in the ensuing pages.

The Society, at the time Mr. Clayton joined it, was composed of only thirteen or fourteen members,‡ and had carried about with it, for the space of four years, the collegian’s imaginary brand of religious infamy.¶ How long

\* Wesley’s Works, 12mo. edit. vol. 26, p. 100.

† Ibid. 8vo. edit. vol. 1, p. 106.

‡ Wesley’s Works. vol. 1, p. 106, 8vo. edit.

¶ The name of *Methodist* is of ancient date. Themison was the founder of a sect of the name, about thirty or forty years before the Christian Era; and it flourished, according to ALPINUS, about three hundred years. LE CLERC, informs us, that the Physicians of this sect were called *Methodists*, because they took it into their heads, to find out a more easy *method* of teaching and practicing the art of Physic. However this may be, it is certain that some of the greatest Physicians of the time in which the sect flourished, were *Methodists*. That Themison was a man of the most extensive practice, is evidently implied in the words of JUVENAL, if he speaks of the same person, which is generally supposed. He is describing the infirmities of an old man, and observes,

Circumsilit agmine facto  
Morborum omne genus, quorum si nomina quæras  
Promptius expediam

Quot Themison ægros autumnò occiderit uno.

“A whole troop of all kinds of diseases rush upon him on all sides; if you ask their names, I could as soon reckon up how many patients Themison killed in one autumn.”—Had his practice, however, been very unsuccessful, it is not probable it would have become so extensive as to become almost proverbial.

he continued a member is not certain, but probably not much more than twelve or fourteen months, as we find him removed to Manchester in the summer of 1733. From these gleanings, it should seem, that the very *first* METHODIST in MANCHESTER was among the *first* members in OXFORD, where he distinguished himself above several of his competitors, in forming the plans and adding to the numbers of the Society,—and that the very first Methodist in Manchester, was a FELLOW of the OLD COLLEGIATE CHURCH. The *name*, not having gone forth against the members of the society, Mr. Clayton of course appeared, not with the title, though with the views, the feelings, and the habits of the persons with whom he had just been associated, and from whom he was separated more as a matter of necessity than of choice. Such a beginning, to say the least, is honourable.

Though Mr. Clayton, on becoming resident in Manchester, was not remarkable for any of those peculiarities which distinguished the Wesleys from others of the clerical order, and though he carefully avoided any intimacy or unnecessary associations with the followers of Mr. Wesley, on their assuming a distinctness of character—confining his attention and labours to the people of his immediate charge, yet his former connexion and continued intimacy with the Oxonians, had a remote influence on what afterwards became the Methodism of the public, and facilitated not only its introduction but its spread in the town and neighbourhood. Mr. Wesley was familiarized to the friends of Mr. Clayton, by his visits to Manchester, and was known to his auditories in general, by preaching in his pulpit; and Mr. Clayton had too high a regard for Mr. Wesley to permit him to be evil spoken of in his presence, and too much religion himself to disturb the religion of his admirers. If there were not direct aids, therefore, there was at least the influence of restraint and respect, and the potent example of

The name of *Methodist* was again employed in 1657, during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, by a person called JOHN SPENCER, who was librarian of Sion College, and who published a book, consisting of extracts from various authors, in which he speaks of the eloquence and elegance of the Sacred Scriptures, and inquires, "Where are now our Anabaptists, and plain pack-staff Methodists, who esteem all flowers of rhetoric in sermons, no better than stinking weeds?" Though we have no particular account of the tenets of the persons referred to, it is certain that a peculiar description of religionists were denominated *Methodists*, during the period specified, and that they were distinguished for great plainness of speech.

GALE, in his fourth part of the "Court of the Gentiles," notices also a religious sect, whom he stiles, "*The New Methodists.*"

And DR. CALAMY, in one of his volumes of the Ejected Ministers, remarks that they called those who stood up for God, "*Methodists.*" The coincidence in these latter cases is the more remarkable, as it was in the time of Mr. Wesley's grandfather—JOHN WESLEY.

It is not improbable, that the Fellow of Merton College, who gave the Oxonian Pietists the name of Methodists, had been aided in his work, by the revival of the epithet in times not much more than half a century from his own.

personal friendship with the Methodistical head—his house being the grand resort of the Oxford Methodists, whenever they visited the town.

Mr. Clayton had not been long in his new situation, before Mr. Wesley tendered his personal respects to him; "For in May (1733), he set out for Epworth, and took Manchester in his way to see him. From thence he proceeded to Epworth, and returned to Manchester on Saturday the 2d of June. The next day he preached three times, once at the Old Church, again in Salford, and at St. Anne's."\* With these two visits, so closely connected with each other, the circumstances in which Mr. Wesley was placed must be associated. The health of his father had been for some time in a declining state, and it was in contemplation to procure the living of Epworth for him, in case of his father's demise. This was a subject which required serious thought, and on which he could neither resolve at once nor without the advice of his friends. He saw the advantage which the family might derive from the enjoyment of the living, and the service of which he might be to the parishioners; but he saw too, the superior advantages which Oxford afforded for personal improvement, and the probability of extensive usefulness among his pupils at the seat of learning, by medicating the streams of knowledge at the spring-head. As he was, therefore, on the most intimate terms of friendship with Mr. Clayton—as Mr. Clayton, though an absentee, might still be considered as a member of the Society—and as mutual converse possesses many advantages over epistolary correspondence, there was coupled with this visit, not only personal regard, but christian counsel; and the meeting itself, at that early period, was stamped with all the sanctity and importance of a *band-meeting* among the more modern members of the Methodist Society. Though there was nothing brilliant in the mental endowments of Mr. Clayton, there was a great deal of chaste, sober, correct thought, united with sterling integrity; and these, in the judgment of Mr. Wesley, were of more essential service in christian communion, than either genius or splendid attainments.

Whatever might be the advantages derived from this visit, on the ground of christian fellowship, and the determination to which he arrived in reference to the living of Epworth, Mr. Wesley had to deplore its consequences in

\* Wesley's Works, Vol. 1, p. 130: Moore's Life of Mr. Wesley, Vol. 1, p. 204.



other respects. In a letter to his father, dated June the 13th, he says, "The effects of my last journey, I believe, will make me more cautious for staying any time from Oxford for the future. One of my young gentlemen told me at my return, that he was more and more afraid of singularity; another, that he had read an excellent piece of Mr. Locke's, which had convinced him of the mischief of regarding authority. Both of them agreed, that the observing Wednesday as a fast was an unnecessary singularity; the Catholic church, (that is, the majority of it) having long since repealed, by contrary custom, the injunction she formerly gave concerning it. A third, who could not yield to this argument, has been convinced by a fever, and Dr. Frewin. Our seven and twenty communicants at St. Mary's, were on Monday shrunk to five; and the day before, the last of Mr. Clayton's pupils, who continued with us, informed me, that he did not design to meet us any more. My ill success, as they call it, seems to be what has frightened every one away from a falling house."\* It may be proper to remark, that Mr. Wesley lost no time in his attempts to recover the ground which his pupils had sacrificed.

Mr. John Byrom had ere this come into possession of the family estate at Kersal, on the death of his brother Edward,† and had settled in Manchester. Between him and Mr. Wesley, a strong intimacy subsisted; and from that intimacy, repeated interviews during the late visits may be fairly inferred. A tract against horse-racing was published in the course of the year, and attributed to Mr. Byrom.‡ The races on Kersal-Moor had only been established three years, and great profligacy attended them. This roused the zeal of the more religious part of the community, and Mr. Byrom had the credit of leading the way in offensive operations. The precise *month* of publication cannot now be ascertained; but as the pamphlet was intended as an antidote to the amusement of the turf, the probability is in favour of its issuing from the press prior to the race-week; and as Mr. Wesley was in Manchester just about the time, it is not to say what influence his advice had in the subject, or how far, on the presumption that Messrs. Wesley, Clayton, and Byrom met, they mutually strengthened each other's hands in attempts of general usefulness.

\* Works, Vol. I. p. 205, 8vo. edit.

† Life prefixed to Nichols's edit. of his Poems, Vol. I, p. 20.

‡ Aikin's History of Manchester.



Though the friendship subsisting between Mr. Wesley and his two Manchester friends, had doubtless been preserved in all its warmth, by repeated communications, yet there is no evidence that he visited the town again till 1735, when another important occurrence happened connected with his personal history. His father died in April of this year, and the Living of Epworth was given away in May; so that he now considered himself as established at Oxford, without any risk of being further disturbed in his calm retreat. But an unexpected scene of action was soon proposed to him, of which he had not before entertained the most remote conception. The Trustees of the new colony of Georgia were greatly in want of proper persons to send thither, to preach the gospel, not to the colony, but to the Indians. They directed their attention to Mr. John Wesley, and some of his friends, as the most suitable characters, chiefly on account of the regularity of their lives, their abstemious habits, and their prompt and patient endurance of hardships. Being in London, August 28th, he met with his friend Dr. Burton, for whom he had a high esteem; and the next day was introduced to Mr. Oglethorpe, where the subject was proposed to him, and strongly urged by such arguments as they deemed most likely to dispose his mind to accept the proposal. It does not appear he gave any positive answer, but rather waived it with a view to consult his friends. Accordingly, he wrote to his brother Samuel, visited Mr. Law, and in three or four days, set out for Manchester, to commune with Mr. Clayton and Mr. Byrom. and several others whose judgments he respected. While with his friends in these quarters, he received a letter from Dr. Burton, directed to Manchester, and franked by Mr. Oglethorpe, of which the following is a copy.

“Sept. 8th, 1735, C. C. C. Oxon.

Dear Sir,

I had it in commission to wait upon you at Oxford, whither by this time I imagined you might be arrived. Your short conference with Mr. Oglethorpe, has raised the hopes of many good persons, that you and yours would join in an undertaking, which cannot be better executed than by such instruments. I have thought again of the matter, and upon the result of the whole, cannot help again recommending the undertaking to your choice: and the more so, since in our enquiries, there appears such an unfitness in the generality of people. The state of ease, luxury, levity, and inadvertency, observable in most of the plausible

and popular Doctors, are disqualifications in a Christian teacher, and would lead us to look for a different set of people. The more men are inured to contempt of ornaments and conveniences of life, to serious thoughts and bodily austerities, the fitter they are for a state which more properly represents our Christian pilgrimage. And if upon consideration of the matter, you think yourselves (as you must do, at least amidst such a scarcity of proper persons) the fit instruments for so good a work, you will be ready to embrace this opportunity of doing good; which is not in vain offered to you. Be pleased to write a line signifying your thoughts to me, or Mr. Oglethorpe; and if by advice I can be assisting to you, you may command my best, best services.

Yours affectionately,

JOHN BURTON."

"P. S.—Mr. Horn telling me he heard you were at Manchester, I presume you are with Mr. Clayton, deliberating about this affair."

From hence Mr. Wesley proceeded to Epworth, in order to lay the case before his mother, and his eldest sister, both of whom acquiesced in his acceptance of the proposal. He is represented by his biographers as hesitating previous to his visit to Manchester;\* and as there are now no documents, either printed or written, to show how far the judgment of Messrs. Clayton, Byrom, and "several others," influenced him in his decisions, the probability is, that as he confided in their judgment—entered their society undetermined—and proceeded to Epworth without any intimation of hesitancy, they supported him with arguments in favour of the proposition. Thus MANCHESTER—in a portion of its natives and residents, may assert its claim for a quota of the honour of directing one of the greatest benefactors of mankind in two of the most important circumstances of his life—circumstances which actually gave rise to the benefits conferred—in giving advice, which prevented a man born for the world, from confining himself to a small country parish, and which led the way to his career of glory in Missionary enterprize—a work in which he lived and expired, and for which thousands will hail him as the blessed of the Lord in eternity.

Agreeable to the dictates of his own mind, and the advice of his friends, Mr. Wesley, in the month of October,

\* Works, Vol. 1. p. 168. Moore's Life, Vol. 1, p. 234.

set out as a Missionary for Georgia in America, where he remained for the space of about two years and four months.\* He landed in England, on his return, February 1st, and such were his attachments in Manchester, that the very month after his arrival, he was seen in the streets and heard in its christian assemblies. The circumstances of the journey are traced with great minuteness by Mr. Wesley, and treated with an air of pleasantry by Mr. Southey.†

Mr. Wesley observes, "Tuesday (March 14), I set out for Manchester, with Mr. Kinchin, Fellow of Corpus Christi, and Mr. Fox, late a prisoner in the city prison." After noticing the characters with whom they mingled, the treatment they experienced, and the conversations in which they engaged, he proceeds: "Being faint in the evening, I called at Altringham, and there lit upon a Quaker, well skilled in, and therefore, as I soon found, sufficiently fond of controversy. After an hour spent therein, perhaps not in vain, I advised him, "To dispute as little as possible, but rather follow after holiness, and walk humbly with his God."

"Late at night we reached Manchester. Friday 17th, we spent entirely with Mr. Clayton, by whom, and the rest of our friends here, we were much refreshed and strengthened. Mr. Hoole, the Rector of St. Anne's Church, being taken ill the next day, on Sunday 19th, Mr. Kinchin and I officiated at Salford Chapel in the morning, by which mean Mr. Clayton was at liberty to perform the service at St. Anne's: and in the afternoon, I preached there on these words of St. Paul, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.'"<sup>†</sup>

There are two forms of expression connected with Manchester, with which it is impossible, in the composition of a work like the present, not to be impressed. Mr. Wesley is represented by his biographers, as visiting Manchester in 1735, not only for the purpose of consulting Messrs. Clayton and Byrom, but "*several others*," whose judgments he respected. The "*several others*" alluded to are, in all probability, the persons who are characterized by Mr. Wesley, in the present instance, as "*the rest of our friends here*." They are *associated* with Mr. Clayton, and receive the appellation of *friends*;—the friendship suggested is *mutual*, for they are *our friends*;—and that friendship is established on the base of *christian communion*, as they enter into fellowship with each

\* Works, 12mo. edit. vol. 26, p. 106, 238.    † Life of Wesley, vol. I, p. 156.

‡ Works, vol. I, p. 263.



other, and are "*refreshed and strengthened*" by this means. From hence, it is not unreasonable to infer that the solitary slip taken from the Oxford stem, had struck its roots in Manchester, or, in other words, that Mr. Clayton possessed the same devotional feeling in Manchester, which he evinced when a member of the Methodist Society, in Oxford—that his labours in the christian ministry had not been in vain—and that, among those who profited by the word, there were some who dared to be singular—who dared to associate together in a more private way, for the purpose of refreshing each other's minds, and strengthening each other's hands. Here was a Christian SOCIETY, both in its spirit and in its practice—a society which appears to have derived its origin from the *Methodist* Society in Oxford, and therefore, properly estimated, one of its branches—a society every way Methodistical, as far as Methodism, in its genius and in its forms, had then an existence, for it had not at this period been proscribed, but was entirely confined in its operation within the pale of the Establishment—and a society, which, when presented to the font for the baptism of the Spirit, might look through Mr. Clayton to the Wesleys for its parentage. But as there had been no collegiate wit in the neighbourhood to christen it, and Mr. Clayton was not likely to adopt that which had been given in derision by others, it escaped for the present the opprobrious epithet; so that, though Methodists existed in *reality* in the town, the name of *Methodist* had not obtained among the inhabitants. Thus, like a company of Jews, who, according to the testimonies of Du-Halde and Grosier in their histories, settled in one of the central districts in China, and were only known to the Chinese by the peculiarities of their religion, the Methodist Society in Manchester seems only to have been known by the more rigid adherence of its members to the duties of Christianity.

After spending three days in the town, Mr. Wesley remarks, "Early in the morning (Monday) we left Manchester, taking with us Mr. Kinchin's brother, for whom we came; to be entered at Oxford. We were determined to lose no opportunity of awakening, instructing, or exhorting, any whom we might meet with in our journey. At Knutsford, where we first stopped, all we spoke to thankfully received the word of exhortation. But at Talk-on-the-Hill, where we dined, she with whom we were, was so much of a gentlewoman, that for near an hour our labour seemed to be in vain. However we spoke on. Upon a sudden, she looked as one just awaked out of sleep. Every



word sunk into her heart. Nor have I seen so entire a change both in the eyes, face, and manner of speaking, of any one in so short a time.”\*

Whatever public attention Mr. Wesley might have attracted by his former visits, he could not fail securing a fair proportion on the present occasion. He had preached *extempore*, and in the *open air*, as early as 1735.† But he was now distinguished above many of his fellows, as a Missionary who had forsaken the comforts of home, in order to convert the Georgian Indians: and as the year rolled on, it continued to unfold events the most important in their consequences to himself and to others. It was in the course of the year, and soon after his visit to Manchester, that he obtained saving faith:‡ added to which, he ventured, in his addresses to God with others, to employ extempore prayer—admitted the assistance of a Lay-Preacher—and drew up the Rules of the Band Societies.”§ With the first of these, his public usefulness stands connected: and it is almost impossible to contemplate such a character as Mr. Wesley, without perceiving his adaptation to the work for which he was destined by divine providence. There are few enlightened minds but will admit, that there existed—with great profaneness, an ample stock of pharisaism in the land, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and especially in the Church with which Mr. Wesley was connected. And where could a fitter instrument be found for the purpose of ousting the pharasaic tribes out of their fastnesses, than a man who had thought, and felt, and acted with the most refined part of them—a man who knew all their subterfuges from having been the subject of them—a man who was taken for a christian of the first order by himself, and by all—except his God, prior to the period of his conversion!

Towards the close of the year, Manchester was visited by another of those luminaries ordained to move in a brilliant track. Dr. Gillies observes of Mr. Whitfield, who was then only in the 24th year of his age, that “After a passage of twenty-four hours from Dublin, he arrived at Park-gate, Thursday, November 30th, preached twice on the Lord’s day at Manchester, and came to London the Friday following, December 8th.”|| Whitfield united himself to the Methodist Society in Oxford, in 1735; and although it was

\* Works, vol. 1. p. 263.

† Myles’s History, p. 7.

+ Works, vol. 1. p. 260—359.

‡ Myles’s Hist. p. 9, 10. || Whitfield’s Life, p. 31.

subsequent to Mr. Clayton's removal from thence, it is not difficult to divine in whose pulpit he officiated, or at whose house he was entertained, during his stay in the town. They must have been known to each other by report, if not by direct correspondence; and such was the spirit of brotherhood manifested by the members of the Society at this time, that they seemed like a number of lucid streams, in sweet and gentle confluence, flowing into each other's views, wills, and affections.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Progress of Methodism—Mr. Wesley's fitness for the Work—Mr. Clayton's apparent declension—The Rev. Wm. Grimshaw, of Howarth—Mr. John Bennet's usefulness, and union with the Methodists—The introduction of Methodism into Todmorden, Chinley, Bongs, Chelmorton, Alpraham, Hopkin-Pit, and Woodley—Mr. Richard Canley—John Nelson, his acquaintance with John Bennet, a providential deliverance in his favour, and his reception at Manchester—John Nelson's second visit into Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire, and his treatment at Monyash—The conduct and death of a clergyman—The further extent of the work of God—An additional visit from John Nelson, together with his rencounters with some Dissenters.*

SOME years elapsed between Mr. Wesley's visit in 1738, and his re-entry into Manchester or the neighbourhood. Considerable progress had been made in the interim, in the work in which he was engaged; and wherever it spread, the title which its subjects received at the UNIVERSITY, followed in its wake—"A new set of Methodists is sprung up." The connection which Mr. Wesley had formed with the Moravians was now dissolved—most of the churches were closed against him, in his official capacity,—private houses, fields, and public streets, were resorted to for the purpose of proclaiming the word of life—a society was formed in London—a preaching-house erected in Bristol—the Foundry opened—Kingswood School established—Stewards elected—Lay-Preachers multiplied—the Society divided into classes—a Hymn Book published—and a theological war proclaimed by Mr. Whitfield against the Arminianism of Methodism. In the midst of all this, no account of Manchester or its vicinity is to be found.

If Mr. Wesley required counsel, in reference to the Living of Epworth and his mission to Georgia, it certainly became more necessary at a crisis, when a mighty mass of concatenated circumstances and events were pressing him into a track as foreign to his own designs, views, and feelings, as

such results had remained unanticipated by his most intimate friends. Still, no Mr. Clayton—no Mr. Byrom is sought; there are no Manchester “friends” to *advise, refresh, and strengthen!* The only probable solution of the subject is, that so much had passed between Mr. Clayton and Mr. Wesley, in an epistolary way, as to convince the one that the other was not altogether friendly to proceedings so hostile to the spirit and manners of the religious public; and in this, they were partly agreed: but Mr. Wesley had gone too far to recede;—circumstances impelled him forward;—Mr. Clayton was a considerable remove from them, and comparatively in the calm of retirement;—and yet, had Mr. Clayton been in the midst of the work, there is reason to believe—and his active conduct as a member of the Society at Oxford will support the position, he would have been among the last to give the signal for its abandonment. However, the want of his hearty concurrence, may account chiefly for Mr. Wesley’s long absence, and also the partial attempts of others upon Manchester, till Methodism had made considerable progress in less apparently favourable districts. Hence the paucity of materials, for furnishing any thing like a connected narrative, in the more early stages of Methodistical operations in these quarters.

Though the work was the very same in its essence, for which Mr. Clayton had been *Methodized* in Oxford, and was followed up by the divinely selected instruments of its birth, the external modifications which it had received, and to which circumstances had given rise, rendered it less palatable to a person, not only fettered down by certain formularies, but really partial to clerical order, from disposition and habit. Yet he was never known to oppose Mr. Wesley, but always entertained the highest opinion of his motives, his talents, and his Christian character. The utmost, perhaps, to which he would even dare to proceed, would be, “*He followeth not with us;*” but a variety of facts go to prove, that—“*Forbid him not,*” would, at the same moment be lingering on the lip, and waiting for seasonable utterance.

Whether any of the persons brought into church fellowship by the exertions of Mr. Clayton, united themselves to those who afterwards received Methodism under its later modifications, through the agency of Mr. Wesley’s lay-preachers, is doubtful: a certain preparatory feeling, however, might possibly be induced, for their reception, as the younger branches of the same family, though the birth-right, with all its appendages and superiority of privilege might be



claimed by Mr. Clayton's adherents as their own, as the first born of Methodism in the place.

The earliest notice of Mr. Wesley's followers, and their nearest approximation to Manchester, in the county of Lancashire, after circumstances had compelled him in some degree to stand apart from the Establishment, is a case in the vicinity of Todmorden, in 1741 or 2. One of the biographers of the Rev. W. Grimshaw, of Haworth, observes, that "James Scholefield, who lived at Calfee, (two or three miles from Todmorden) was a very strict churchman. His wife had heard a *Methodist* Sermon, and was convinced she was a sinner: she was deeply distressed about her soul. Her husband told Mr. Grimshaw, and desired him to come and speak to her. This he did, and endeavoured to comfort her, by telling her 'To put away those gloomy thoughts; to go into merry company; to take her diversion in life; and that all should be well with her at last.' However, she did not take his advice, but continued crying to the Lord, who, shortly after, spoke peace to her soul; and by her conduct and conversation, her husband was convinced of sin, and found mercy through the blood of the Lamb. Soon after Mr. Grimshaw had experienced the pardoning love of God, at Haworth, he came to James Scholefield's house, and exclaimed to his wife as follows:—'Oh! Mary, what a blind leader of the blind was I when I came to take off thy burden, by exhorting thee to live in pleasure, and to follow the vain amusements of the world: but God has in mercy pardoned and blessed us all three, blessed be his GREAT NAME.'""\*

The stream of knowledge in this notice is a little turbid in its descent, arising, probably, from certain circumstances rendering it impracticable for the author to obtain a nearer approach to the fountain-head. This is not intended as a reflection: nor can it be at all disreputable to any traveller, who has toiled to trace a river to its source, to have a successor who has pushed his researches some leagues further up the country than himself; for had it not been for the indelible impression of the foot upon the sand, as a guide to his steps, not only in the outset but on his route, his own journeyings had probably never proceeded beyond the point—if even so far, at which the other was compelled to pause. The name of the female referred to above, was Susan, not Mary Scholefield; and it was under Mr. Grimshaw's own ministry, and not that of a Methodist Preacher, that she was impressed. The circumstance which led to it probably never

\* Myles's Life of Grimshaw p. 2, 3.

came to the knowledge of Mr. Myles. The poor woman had overlaid her child, in consequence of which, she was greatly distressed. In her agony, she fled to the House of God, where a concern for salvation originated. She applied for pastoral advice to Mr. Grimshaw, who accosted her with, "I cannot tell what to say to you, Susan, for I am in the same state myself; but to despair of the mercy of God, would be worse than all."

It is not improbable, that the transfer from Mr. Grimshaw to a Methodist Preacher had been occasioned by the circumstance of the Methodists having found their way about this time into the neighbourhood. John Bennet, a native of Derbyshire, who had been brought to God under the ministry of David Taylor, had extended his ministerial labours into different parts of Derbyshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire, previous to his union with Mr. Wesley; and the union took place in 1743.\* What was emphatically called "John Bennet's *round*," embraced the greater part of these three counties, with the borders of those adjacent to them.

On the Derbyshire side of Manchester,—Bongs, in the parish of Mellor,—Chinley, near Chapel-in-le-Frith,—and Banmoor, in Peak Forest, could all boast of an alliance with Methodism before this period.† Nor must Chelmorton be omitted, not only because of its priority, but because of its subsequent connexion with the Manchester Circuit, and its furnishing the Manchester Society with the Marsden family—the father of the Rev. George Marsden, and three uncles, having all been among the first-fruits of John Bennet's ministry,‡ and convinced of sin under the same discourse.

In Cheshire, John Bennet appears to have been rather singularly favoured, by having the way prepared for his reception. This was unintentionally occasioned by a female pioneer, who resided at Alpraham, which is about twelve miles from Chester, and thirty from Manchester. The young person referred to, was religiously disposed, and met with considerable opposition from her friends, who were of a less devotional character than herself. She was enabled, however, to persevere in her christian course, through the encouragement which she received from a Baptist family of the name of Cawley. But not being disposed to have persecution quartered on her for life, she removed to London, in order to reside with some of her relatives. Her friendship with

\* See Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield and its vicinity, vol. I, p. 8, 23—27, 40, 257, for a more ample account of his conversion and ministry.

† *ibid.* p. 19.

‡ *ibid.* p. 26—7.

the Cawley family was preserved alive by correspondence; and having frequently heard Messrs. Wesley and Whitfield preach out of doors—it being just about the period when field-preaching commenced, and it was the topic of public and private conversation in the metropolis, her letters were generally richly fraught with paragraphs in their favour. These letters excited considerable interest in the bosoms of old Mr. and Mrs. Cawley, who were lovers of good men, and a still deeper interest in the breast of their son Richard, who had then arrived at a state of manhood. The latter in particular, felt an anxious solicitude to see and to hear the men whose fame was thus emblazoned in such glowing terms. The subject matter of the letters was known to others; and a small society of young men was actually formed, for the purpose of reading and explaining the scriptures, and assisting each other in devotional exercises. These young persons, with Mr. Richard Cawley at their head, met regularly in the vestry of Bunbury Church; and for the purpose of aiding them the more effectually in their pious designs, one of the prebends of Chester made them a present of Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament. This boon, however, was to be enjoyed by them only so long as they continued to meet in the vestry and attend the service of the Establishment; nor could such condition, with the prebend's probable knowledge of the connexion of some of them with other denominations, be received as matter of surprise: and its propriety will be justified by the issue. When John Bennet, John Nelson, and others, made their appearance in the neighbourhood, and were known to be connected with Mr. Wesley—the man of whom so much had been written, and read, and heard, they were cordially received. Mr. Richard Cawley invited them to his father's house—a society was formed—the vestry association was broken up—and Burkitt's Notes, like many other venerable folios hung in chains in our cathedrals, at a time when books were more scarce and depredations might be more frequent, were to be seen chained in a conspicuous part of Bunbury church, where they remained for years—and may possibly yet be beheld, as a monument, not only of the existence, but of the dissolution of the reading society in the vestry.

Richard Cawley was a man of correct conduct, and of a superior mind. Such was the esteem in which he was held by his father, that the old gentleman almost implicitly bowed to his will in all things; and hence his readiness to accede to his wishes, in suffering the Methodist Preachers—though a baptist in principle and practice, to preach in his



house. As Richard advanced in life, he rose in religious respectability. He was beheld with reverential awe by rich and poor, by young and old, by saint and sinner. The clergyman, who was not an enlightened man, very often made rude attempts at a more evangelical strain in his sermons, with a view to his individual gratification, and would endeavour afterwards to elicit his opinion of their merits. Untoward boys were not unfrequently paid by him, with presents of money, and other valuables, in order to allow him to teach them to read. With such an opening, and supported by such influence, the preachers must have considered the divine seal as having been affixed to their call to the place.—Preaching was afterwards removed to the house of Mr. Simpf, probably because of its being better calculated to accommodate a large congregation: but for some time prior to the period assigned for the conversion of Messrs. Simpf and Hitchens,\* both Mr. Wesley and his Preachers had preached in the house of old Mr. Cawley, at the instance of his son.

It was to Alpraham, very likely, and other places in Cheshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire, that John Bennet intended to conduct John Nelson, on their first acquaintance at Leeds, which took place a considerable time *before* the latter was impressed for a soldier, and from which he was released so early as the summer of 1744.† To relate the circumstances of their interview, and of the journey, in other language, or in any other way than that in which John Nelson himself has bodied them forth, would be to detract from the general interest: and the man who can read his Journal through, without shedding the sympathetic tear, or improving in his christian character, is neither to be envied in his feelings nor his state of mind. John Nelson wrote just as those children speak, who are taught by nature rather than at school: he is simple, touching, and sprightly; there is no design—no effort—yet great effect.

“Some time after we had begun at Leeds,” says he, “Mr. John Bennet, from Chinley in Derbyshire, came to our town, and sent for me to an inn: I did not know him, but by his dress I took him to be a Preacher. I said, ‘I do not know you: pray what is your name?’ He told me. I asked him if he came from Mr. Wesley: he said, ‘No: I am not in connexion with him; I am in fellowship with the Moravian brethren: but I had a great opinion of Mr. Wesley for some time, till I saw a little pamphlet which he lately

\* Meth. Mag. 1825, p. 722.

† Journal p. 170.



published, which he styles, *The character of a Methodist*, and it has turned my mind.' I asked, 'Sir, what do you find wrong there?' He replied, 'There is too much perfection in it for me.' I answered, 'Then you think a less degree of holiness will fit you for heaven, than what is mentioned there: pray what are the words you stumble at?' On his telling me, I said, 'They are the words of St. John.' But he said, 'We know by experience that there is no such thing to be attained in this life.' I replied, 'If your experience do not answer to what St. Paul and St. John speak, I shall not regard it;' and when I mentioned some passages of Scripture, he did not believe that what I said was Scripture. I pulled out my bible, and shewed him the words; and when he had read them, his countenance changed, and he cavilled no more.

"When we met again, we seemed to be of one heart and judgment: for God revealed his will to him soon after he had parted with me, and made him an instrument to turn many to righteousness, and to bring me and my brethren to preach in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire.

"The first time I went, he met me at Marsden, to conduct me into Cheshire; but as I went over a great common, a little behind Huddersfield, a dog leaped out of the heath, and came and smelled at my leg, and walked by my side for near a mile: he then went to the houses that were a little out of the way, and bit several dogs, and came running after me again, and walked by my side till he saw another house, where he fought with a dog; then followed me again. Thus he went on for about five miles, and went with me into the inn at Marsden, when he sat down by my side. There were several men in the house, when I asked, if any of them knew whose dog that was; but none of them could tell. I said, I think he is mad; but they laughed me to scorn. Soon after, another dog came in, and he went and bit him directly, and ran out, and bit four more, and then the men pursued and killed him. When I saw that God had kept me in such imminent danger, I was greatly humbled before him.

"As Mr. Bennet and I went over to Stanedge, we met David Taylor,\* who had got so much into the poor sinner-ship, that he would scarcely speak to me; he called Mr. Bennet to a distance, and said, he was sorry that he was going to take me into Derbyshire, for I was so full of law and reason, that I should do a great deal of hurt wherever I went.

"I preached twice that afternoon, once at Hopkin-pit,

\* See Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, &c. for a full account of D. Taylor, vol. I. p. 1-64.

in Lancashire, and the other time at Woodley, in Cheshire. It was given out, unknown to me, for me to preach at Manchester-cross on the Sunday in the afternoon. About ten people went with me from Mr. Lackwood's\* to Manchester. When we arrived there, I do not know but there might be two thousand people gathered together at the cross; and most of them behaved well. But when I was in the middle of my discourse, one at the outside of the congregation threw a stone, which cut me on the head: however, that made the people give greater attention, especially when they saw the blood run down my face, so that all was quiet till I had done, and was singing a hymn. Then the constable and his deputy came and seized me and Mr. Bennet, and said, 'You must go before the justice.' I asked, 'By what order?' He held up his staff, saying that was his warrant, and he would make me go. I answered, 'I will not resist; for if I have done any thing contrary to the law, I ought to suffer by the law.' He said, I should suffer for what I had done; then he began to strike the people that crowded about us. As soon as he and his deputy could get through the multitude, they outran us: When I called and said, 'Stay, gentlemen, for we cannot get through the people as fast as you.' But the people crowded about us in such a manner, that we saw the constable no more. Afterwards we rode to Jonathan Holmes's. That night we had a blessed meeting; and the Lord was much with us all the time I stayed in those places."†

This is the *first* sermon, from a *lay-preacher*, of which there is any account, connected with Methodism in the town of Manchester; and in the treatment which John Nelson received, Mr. Clayton,‡ who could not be ignorant of passing events, especially in the place of his residence, would be enabled to form an estimate of some of the evils and inconveniences he escaped, by ceasing to push on in the track with Mr. Wesley, in which Methodism was leading the way—and evils too, which others were enduring from their advocacy of the very cause which he himself had espoused, strengthened, and laboured to perpetuate in Oxford. It is possible, that John Bennet might have made an attempt to introduce lay-preaching into Manchester before this period, but very improbable; and the improbability of the circum-

\* The name is retained as it occurs in J. Nelson's Journal, though it is suspected that it ought to be spelt Lockwood. + Journal p. 73—78.

‡ Mr. Wesley notices another clergyman of the name of Clayton about this time, and one with whom he was on the most intimate terms; but it was the Revd—Clayton of Wensley, who officiated in Wensleydale, and died full of piety and years in 1746. See works, vol. 23, p. 190, 226, 373.

stance is founded on the simple relation of the preceding fact. Had the people been familiarized with preaching, as at Bongs, Chinley, Chelmorton, and other places, to have proceeded to Manchester would have been a matter of course. Hopkin-pit, and Woodley, are both noticed in a manner, that impresses the reader with the notion of their having been places at which preaching had been established. But Manchester was matter of surprize to John Nelson; to preach there—not barely at the cross—but in the town itself, was “*unknown*” to him—a circumstance which had never been contemplated. John Bennet had laboured round the outskirts; but knowing probably Mr. Clayton’s former connexion with the Methodists, and his relinquishment of the system in its more matured form,—and anticipating at the same time, great opposition from the immoral part of the inhabitants, while calls from minor places furnished him with full employment, the town was left for the conquest of a spirit of still more noble daring than his own—for the entrance of a man who knew no fear, except the fear of his God, and who was actually in Methodism, what NELSON was acknowledged to be on the face of the deep. It was a formal, and what under the circumstances of the case might be considered, a formidable entrance. In addition to John Bennet, “About *ten* people went with” him “from Mr. Lackwood’s.” This was no uncommon case in the infancy of Methodism; nor during any part of its progress; the writer of these pages himself—though comparatively of yesterday, has, when visiting a place in which a Methodist ministry has not been exercised, and in which no society has been formed, been accompanied by several friends from a neighbouring town, in order to assist in the singing department, both in the cottage and in the open air.—If a single friend had been gained to Methodism in Manchester, previous to this—unconnected with the serious part of Mr. Clayton’s auditory, the name of that friend would certainly have been noticed, either as affording them countenance, shelter, or refreshment; nor can we account for such omission, under all the singular and painful peculiarities of the case, but in the non-existence of such a character. They appear to have entered the town without a friend among its numerous inhabitants—to have put up their horses at an inn—proceeded straight to the cross—remounted—left the place as friendless as they entered—and rode on to Jonathan Holmes’s for the quiet and enjoyment denied them elsewhere.

As the two preachers had left Woodley for Manchester,



at the first of which places they seem to have been entertained at the house of Mr. Lackwood, the place at which Jonathan Holmes resided must have been distinct from it, and, from the mode of expression adopted, must have been accustomed to something like regular preaching; for there, says John Nelson, "We had a blessed *meeting*; and the Lord was much with us all the time I stayed in those places." Woodley is a small country place, about three miles east of Stockport, and may be looked up to with filial affection by the Stockport Society as its parent.

After spending some time in these parts, John Nelson returned to Birstal, his native place, and from thence, at the request of Mr. Wesley, proceeded into Lincolnshire. On his return from the fens, he remarks, "I found God had opened the mouth of Jonathan Reeves, and blessed his word to numbers about Birstal; and we laboured together for some time, till I returned into Mr. Bennet's circuit."

On entering upon his journey, he proceeds: "I went into the Peak to preach at Monyash, when a clergyman, with a great company of men that worked in the lead-mines, all being in liquor, came in just as I began to give out the hymn. As soon as we began to sing, he began to halloo and shout, as if he were hunting with a pack of hounds, and so continued all the time we sang. When I began to pray, he attempted to overturn the chair that I stood on, but he could not, although he struck so violently with his foot, that he broke one of the arms of the chair quite off. When I began to preach, he called on his companions to pull me down; but they replied, 'No, Sir, the man says nothing but the truth: pray hold your peace, and let us hear what he has to say.' He then came to me himself, took me by the collar of the shirt, and pulled me down; then he tore down my coat cuffs, and attempted to tear it down the back; then took me by the collar and shook me. I said, "Sir, you and I must shortly appear at the bar of God, to give an account of this night's work." He replied, 'What! must you and I appear before God's bar together?' I said, 'As sure as we look one another in the face now.' He let go my throat, took my Bible out of my hand, and turning it over and over, said, 'It is a right Bible; and if you preach by the Spirit of God, let me hear you preach from this text;' which was, 'Wisdom strengtheneth the wise, more than ten mighty men in a city.' I got up and began to preach from this text, and when any offered to make a noise, the miners said, 'Hold your peace, or we



will make you, and let us hear what he will make of the parson's text.' As I went on, the parson said, 'That is right: That is true.' After a while he looked round, and saw many in tears; then he looked at me, and went away, leaving me to finish my discourse in peace. All the rest of the Circuit I had peaceable meetings; and the Lord kept still adding to the number of his children."\*

The clergyman who disgraced his profession in his conduct on the present occasion, was pre-eminent for his hostility to Methodism; and not unfrequently interlarded his discourses with the severest vituperatives against those who had favoured it with a hearty reception. One of the uncles of the Rev. George Marsden, on leaving the Church on one occasion, after hearing an anti-Methodistical sermon, was accosted in a tone of triumph by a friend of the minister, with,—"He has done for you now." The vaunt was received with meekness, and was replied to with solemnity: "If that man die the common death of men, I am much mistaken." The catastrophe was terrible. After acting the part of a persecutor to a number of persons—persons as inoffensive as they were devout and useful, for no other assignable reason than that of differing from him in religious opinion; and after connecting with the sacred office the life of a dissolute sot, some years subsequent to this, when on one of his inebriating perambulations, he was led, through the darkness of the night, and his own want of self-control, to the brink of one of those tremendous tors for which the High Peak of Derbyshire is so much distinguished, where he was precipitated to the base, and must, from the nature of the fall, have instantly expired. His mangled remains, if report be correct—and the information was furnished to the writer by the grandson of John Nelson, who received it from the persons themselves, were first discovered by some poor men, members of the Methodist Society, when proceeding to their labour the next day. It is not the intention of the writer, either to pronounce the tragical event a signal judgment of heaven, or to exalt the character of Mr. Marsden into that of a prophet of God. Persons less tenacious of both prophecy and punishment, and who labour for their own sake, from a consciousness of deserving the lash, to get rid of a first cause, may accommodate both themselves and others, by affirming Mr. Marsden's remark to be within the reach of all, and such an exit to be the probable result of

\* Journal p. 83.

such a life, in such a perilous district, from the hazards and hair-breadth escapes attendant on intemperance, and the frequent deaths which are presented to the eye in the rear: and such a comment is offered for the perusal of some religious characters, to whose visual rays the hand of God is less frequently seen than to others, and who can only hear his voice in the declarations of Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles. The fact is simply stated; the interpretations given to it will vary with the religious light and feelings of the reader; but few will deny, that it contains a moral—and that the moral may be found in that antiquated expression, “The way of *duty* is the way of *safety*.”

With the exception of Monyash, John Nelson's second tour through these parts, bears the stamp of peace and prosperity: the people were favoured with “peaceable meetings, and the Lord kept still adding to the number of his children;”—expressions, which, in this stage of the work, speak volumes for God, the agents, and the people; for as yet, there were only two preachers to be found, Messrs. Bennet and Nelson: and extraordinary must have been that general respect for character, which restrained the baser part of the populous from manifesting the natural enmity of the human heart to sacred subjects, from breaking through every barrier upon agents of such little promise, and from at once crushing a rising cause, which levelled its shafts at every species of self-indulgence. So much does John Nelson appear to have enjoyed this visit, and such were the prospects of increasing usefulness, that after returning to his family at Birstal, and labouring a short time at his regular calling as a mason, with a view perhaps, not only to support his family, but to recruit his exhausted funds, he made another tour; respecting which he observes,

“As I was passing through part of Lancashire, I found the Lord reviving his work among the people. After I had done preaching at one place, a man and his wife came to me, both in tears, and desired me to pray with them. I did so. When I had done, I was exhorting them to abstain from evil, and to continue in prayer, and told them, God would shew mercy unto them, for the obedience and blood-shedding of his Son. Presently a Dissenter broke out, and said, ‘You are deceiving the people, and setting them to lean upon a broken reed, by telling them that another man's obedience and blood would atone for their sins.’ I asked him how he could stand before that God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, if there were no merit in the

blood of Christ, to atone for his sins? He said, 'Man hath such noble faculties, that if he improve them, he will thereby qualify himself for heaven; but you degrade man's nature in your preaching, and set him on a level with the brute beasts.' I said, 'Did I so?' He replied, 'Yes, you did; for I heard you myself.' I replied, 'Then, Sir, you heard me preach false doctrine: for if I set a natural man upon a level with the beasts, I set him greatly out of his place: I believe he is far worse; for he has not only all the faculties of the beast, which are lust and earthly-mindedness, but the nature of the devil,—wrath, pride, malice, and ambition; he is therefore three degrees worse than a beast, till he is created anew in Christ Jesus; so that if I ranked him with the beasts, I set him above his place.' Then he burst out into anger: but I said, 'Sir, make use of that reason you speak of, and let me see you save yourself from anger.' At which he was ready to strike me; and went away, leaving me, as he said, in my stupid condition.

"When I got about ten miles further into the country, another Dissenter came into the house, where I was at prayer with a poor man. When I had done, I exhorted him not to rest, till he was sure that the Lord Jesus had loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood. At which words the Dissenter spoke out, saying, 'I hate to hear people talking of being assured of any such thing, or of perfection in this world.' I replied, 'Is the Lord of Life able to do what he came from heaven to do?' He said, 'What is that?' I answered, 'To destroy the works of the devil, to make an end of sin, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.' He said, 'Shall you make me believe that any man can live without committing sin?' I answered, 'I cannot tell whether I can make you believe or not; but this I can tell you, by the authority of God's word; that if you are not saved from your sins here, you must be damned.' 'Well,' he said, 'I care not what you say, for no man can live without committing sin, one day.' I replied, 'By your talk, it is as necessary for a man to commit sin, as to eat; for you say, he cannot live without it. Now, doth it keep his body or soul alive? Or do you believe that all mankind are to live in sin, and die without perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and so be damned without hope or help?' He answered, 'No: God forbid.' Then I said, 'You must believe there is a purgatory, to cleanse the soul in after death. Sir, you and the devil speak one language; for he said to our mother Eve, 'Did God say, In the day ye eat thereof,



ye shall die? Ye shall not die;’ God saith, ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die.’ But you say, ‘The souls of all must continue in sin, and they shall not die.’ He said, ‘You shock me; if things be as you say, what will become of the greatest part of mankind?’ I replied, ‘Our Lord says, ‘What is that to thee, follow thou me?’ He said, ‘I cannot but acknowledge you have the Scripture on your side: but if you are right, we are sadly wrong. I never did hear one of you in my life; for our minister has warned us not to hear you; but I am determined to hear you this night.’ So he did, and thanked me kindly when I had done.”\*

The principal opposition experienced during the two last visits—if indeed a part of it merit the name of opposition, arose from the professors of religion—ministers and people. As Manchester was important in its population, and had received the introductory discourse of a lay-ministry in rather an ungracious manner, it may be presumed, that, if it had been again visited, particularly as it was the same person who was concerned, some notice would have been taken of it, either in the way of shewing that hostilities were still maintained, or that the storm had subsided, and the sun of prosperity was beginning to skirt the horizon. This good man—JOHN NELSON, who lived for the benefit of others, “hewing stone” in his own language, “in the day time, and preaching every night,” while resident at Birstal—this good man was impressed for a soldier almost immediately on his return to Yorkshire—impressed at the instigation of inn-keepers and clergymen—and for no other reason or cause, than that of warning his fellow-creatures to flee from the wrath to come.

\* Journal p. 108, 111.



## CHAPTER III.

*Spread of Methodism in Haworth and its neighbourhood—The Rev. Wm. Grimshaw—Mr. J. Williams, of Kidderminster—Messrs. J Maskeu, Paul Greenwood, and Wm. Darney—Mr. Grimshaw's increasing usefulness, and contemplated opposition to Wm. Darney—Societies raised up near Todmorden, at Bacup, Mill-End, Miller-Barn, and Gauksholm—John Maden, his conversion, and Sabbath-walks—Heap-Barn, in Rossendale, visited—Wm. Darney's character—Jonathan Maskeu's bravery in the midst of Persecution—Scotch Rebellion, and the use made of it by enemies—John Morris—Mr. Wesley visits the vicinity of Manchester, an anecdote of him, his visit repeated—Quietism—Mr. Turner, of Bongs—Preachers impressed for soldiers—Richard Moss, his life, and ministry—A good work at Betley, near Namptwich.*

On the abridgement of John Nelson's civil and religious liberty, which took place, May 4th, 1744,\* the field of labour was chiefly left to John Bennet. Mr. Wesley, in passing and repassing, while on his northern and southern excursions, had halted previously to this at Sheffield, at Birstal, and even visited Halifax and its vicinity; but the set time for Manchester had not apparently arrived; Mr. Clayton, with but one exception, remained the undisturbed possessor of it, and exhibited Methodism in its softer mouldings, as received from the Oxonian mint. The fire, however, which had been kindled in the country, was breaking out like concealed flames in an immense assemblage of buildings, in unexpected quarters. Haworth, in Yorkshire, and Colne, in Lancashire, together with the surrounding villages and hamlets, were prepared for Methodism in its humbler and sterner forms, as associated with untutored genius—with lay and itinerant preaching, by the bold, pow-

\* Wesley's Work, vol. 28, p. 227.

erful, and apostolic ministry of the Rev. Wm. Grimshaw, who, ere this, had been renovated in spirit and reformed in life.

5 | Mr. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, whose interesting Diary had been long before the religious world, and with one of whose immediate descendants the writer has conversed, intimates in a letter to the Rev. Malachi Blake, of Blandford,\* that Mr. Grimshaw had adopted part of the usages of the Methodists, before his personal acquaintance with them. His letter is dated March 5, 1747, and writing in the present tense, he observes, "He reckons at least, one hundred and twenty souls savingly renewed, whom he hath formed into little classes, after the manner of the Methodists; and it is amazing to me how much he hath drank into their spirit, though he never saw or conversed with any of them. Over each class presides one man who has the gift of prayer, which, he says, some of them have received lately, whose business is to converse, as well as pray with the others, and watch over them; and now and then he meets with these heads, who give him accounts of the individuals. Among them there are two, who I think, were both converted by his ministry, who being capable thereof, do with his approbation, exhort and expound the Scriptures in private houses, and people flock together to hear them; and more than once he told me, he thought as many had been converted by their ministrations as his own."

Though Mr. Williams thus writes in the present tense, yet what he penned was evidently copied from private memorandums which had been previously made, or was a reminiscence of what he had heard, of which Mr. Blake had received some intimation, and respecting which he was desirous of being more fully and perfectly informed. This is implied in the introductory sentence, which is, "The most material passages of what I learned from Mr. Grimshaw, touching his life, &c. is as follows." He then furnishes a biographical sketch of his subject, and carries it forward to the period of his correspondence with Mr. Blake. There is not, therefore, any thing which militates against an earlier acquaintance with the Methodists, than that of the date affixed to the letter. Or if Mr. Williams wished to suggest it as the period of their intimacy, he must have laboured under some misconception of Mr. Grimshaw's meaning, as to date, since there is reason to believe it took place in 1744, in the person

and through the exertions of William Darney. That Mr. Grimshaw had “drank into their spirit” *before* “he *conversed* with any of them,” cannot be questioned, as both had received the baptism of the same Spirit from on high, which had operated upon each in a similar way; but still, though he might not have *seen* or *conversed* with any of them antecedent to his own more extended plans of usefulness, the general attention they were attracting might have reached his *ears*, and from what he heard, he might have been induced to adopt their usages. The “one hundred and twenty souls,” whose conversion is noticed, comprehends a view of the work in its *progress*, and the *classes* as an *accompaniment*. It was the “gift of prayer” that had been “*lately*” received, and the appointment of “heads” or leaders that had but “*lately*” taken place; both of which might date for their origin the year 1747, while his acquaintance with the Methodists might institute a prior claim, though still subsequent to his conversion and ministerial usefulness.

The “two” persons alluded to, by Mr. Williams, as exhorters, were Messrs. Paul Greenwood, and Jonathan Maskew, both of whom were known in Rossendale, by the appellation of “Mr. Grimshaw’s *men*.”\* The former of these, of whose early history the least is known, “Was a Christian,” says Mr. Pawson, “of the primitive stamp; he was particularly remarkable for genuine simplicity, integrity, and spiritual-mindedness. His fervent zeal for the prosperity of the work of God, in the conversion of sinners, and building up of the saints in their most holy faith, appeared in all his actions; and his labours in the ministry were attended with the blessing of heaven, in every place where he preached. The sacred fire of divine love was kept continually burning in his own soul, so that he was always ready for every good work. He continually preached wherever he went, and had a word in season for every one that came in his way.”† Of his birth, his parentage, and the manner of his conversion, time has left few memorials. The place of his nativity was accidentally obtained in the course of conversation, when the writer of the present work was on a visit to Haworth, having had the eye directed to the spot—consisting of two or three isolated houses, on the side of one of the wild hills, a short distance from Haworth, on the road to Colne, and led to increased information from the Rev. Charles Radcliffe, to whose taste for the antique, judgment, and persever-

\* Myles’s Life of Grimshaw, p. 17.

† Meth. Mag. 1795, p. 143.



ing research, as already acknowledged, the writer has been indebted for the Haworth department.

Jonathan Maskew, who appears to have been made of more athletic materials than Paul Greenwood, was born near Bingley, in Yorkshire, in the year 1713. It would appear from his confined education, that his parents were far from being opulent; and it is probable, it was with difficulty they supported the expence of his learning, in the little he acquired, which was not much more than reading and writing. Hence, whatever were his future acquisitions in letters and knowledge, it is to be ascribed more to his own industry, than to original instruction. He was the subject of early religious impressions, deep conviction, powerful temptation, and of a sound conversion to God.\* He was connected with Mr. Grimshaw at the time Mr. Williams wrote to his friend; and the phraseology employed, would lead to the belief of both himself and his companion having been engaged in the work some length of time, for they are represented in the character of *established* exhorters of *continued* usefulness. For many years, Jonathan Maskew formed part of Mr. Grimshaw's family, enjoyed his friendship, and partook of his bounty. It is said he superintended his glebe, and united in himself the servant and companion.

While Mr. Grimshaw and his *men* were concentrating their energies for the welfare of the parishioners, Wm. Darney, a native of Scotland, who had been, what was equivalent to a *local* preacher, two years,† struck in with one of his wild notes, which—though at first like a discordant tone, was preparatory to the richest harmony. He was a man possessed of but few personal attractions—of a broad Scottish dialect—and, when dwelling on the terrors of the Lord, terrible to behold; but a man of deep piety, plain sense, and a burning zeal, with a courage that fearlessly defied all opposition. There was a rich vein of evangelical truth in his preaching, looking occasionally to the Calvinistic side of the question, and often delivered with the quaintness of some of the old Puritan Preachers, which pleased and profited many. Perhaps, too, his popularity was not diminished by his frequently, at the close of his sermon, giving out an extemporaneous hymn, adapted to the subject upon which he had been discoursing. The poetry of these extemporaneous effusions was not, indeed, of the first class, as the hymns which he afterwards published

\* See a Memoir of him, by Mr. Gaultier, Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 473—8, 510—&c.

† Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 447.



abundantly testify, but it interested the uncultivated, and his preaching was made the power of God to salvation.

Paul Greenwood, to whose christian and ministerial character Mr. Pawson has borne honourable testimony, had ere this attained to some degree of maturity in the divine life. The slender memorials to which allusion has been made, and which it is the more necessary to preserve, as they have never appeared in any printed form, come home to the heart with peculiar interest, and exhibit the immediate as well as the more remote consequences which frequently follow a solitary conversion to God. He was awakened to a sense of his sin and danger by reading a religious tract—supposed to be Mr. Seagrave's Sermon on Gal. 3, 24, which publication was afterwards borrowed of the Greenwood family by Mr. Grimshaw, on his becoming resident at Haworth. One day, young Paul, under deep conviction of sin, went into the barn to pray, where he continued an unusual length of time. His father, under some unpleasant apprehensions, went to see what had become of him, and found him engaged in earnest prayer. After standing a few moments, he himself was powerfully affected—kneeled upon the ground—and began also to raise the voice of supplication. It was not long before the mother went in search of both, who stood in like manner for a short time—bowed the knee—and prayed earnestly for mercy. Soon afterwards they were joined by a brother, and then by a sister, who were no less in earnest for salvation, and they all obtained peace with God before they left the place. This event occurred before Mr. Grimshaw obtained the living of Haworth—probably in 1740 or 1741, and before the name of *Methodist* was known by any of the family. When Mr. Grimshaw, therefore, went to Haworth, he found at least one pious family in the neighbourhood, composed of the excellent of the earth; and instead of having been the instrumental cause of young Paul's conversion, which Mr. Williams was inclined to believe, but still seemed to hesitate whether to repose full confidence in the accuracy of his memory, it would rather appear that the Greenwood family—and Paul among the others, had been of service to him, by the loan Mr. Seagrave's useful sermon. The place at which the Greenwood family resided, which has been slightly adverted to, was Ponden, about two miles from Haworth; and if they had lived in the apostolic age, their eminent piety would have secured them no ordinary share of respect.

Methodism being much talked of through the country,

and Mr. Grimshaw himself being deeply serious, it is not at all surprizing that the rude specimen which appeared in his neighbourhood, and which he had in William Darney, should attract more than usual attention. Darney, as well as himself, was like a comet out of its usual course, baffling the calculations of astronomers. He scarcely knew what to make of him. Tidings of his appearance reached his ears; to which was appended,—That he preached what was considered by Mr. Grimshaw the popish doctrine of justification by faith. As the clergyman of the parish, he deemed it an imperious duty to confute the heretical notion; and, in his straight forward zeal, went to hear William Darney, with a view to give efficacy to the premeditated opposition. It so happened, that the preacher was actually treating on the subject in question, when Mr. Grimshaw entered the house; and having established his thesis by appropriate appeals to the Scriptures, the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England, Mr. Grimshaw was so far from attempting a confutation, that he was convinced of the truth of the doctrine, and gave it, in the generosity of his soul—though proceeding from the lips of one who had never studied on classic ground, a welcome reception. After this, he embraced every opportunity of conversing with him in private, taking him occasionally into a stone pit in the neighbourhood of his own house, and other retired places, where they walked to and fro in solitude, and exhibited to each other their separate views of christian doctrine, as well as unbosomed to each other their personal feelings. Such, however, was the ascendancy which shame maintained, that if a dog barked, he would shrink like the sensitive plant from the touch, and with less elevation of voice would say, ‘Hush! there is some body coming.’\* This is the more remarkable, when his native fearlessness of character is brought to bear upon the fact: but he had been previously awakened to a humiliating sense of his own vileness—his former life was ever before him—he had a religious character to establish—Jonathan Maskew and Paul Greenwood, though both laymen, were partly of his own training, and had their characters gradually unfolded before the people, which unfoldment, as imperceptibly prepared the people for the exercise of their ministry; here, on the contrary, was a perfect stranger—a man, perhaps, as homely in his attire as in his language—and professing a connexion with a sect almost every where *spoken against*.

\* Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 18.

Mr. Grimshaw's "*men*" had fewer prejudices to conquer, because brought into contact with a person more immediately on a level with themselves. Jonathan Maskew in particular, therefore, no sooner heard of the Methodists, and read the few publications which were before the public, than he united himself to them, and was accordingly one of the first members of society in Haworth.\* His heart being filled with love to God, and zeal for his cause, he proceeded, as Methodism spread, from the neighbourhood in which he resided, into various parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The unction of his word, and the warmth of his address, were well remembered, when in the vigor of life; fearless of danger,—the inclemency of seasons,—and in the midst of violent and barbarous persecutors, he preached the gospel of God our Saviour.

Such connexions, and such prospects, only contributed to add fuel to the fire of Wm. Darney's zeal. As Mr. Grimshaw increased in knowledge and piety, the fear of man subsided; and super-added to his natural courage, he partook plentifully of that daring and fortitude, which are the result of religion and innocence, and which even delicate females have evinced on the wheel and at the stake. Wm. Darney, therefore, was not long in prevailing upon him to give out the hymn before sermon, and soon afterwards, to pray in public. This induced some of the parishioners to manifest their petty hostility, by saying "*Mad Grimshaw* has become clerk to *Scotch Will*; and *Scotch Will* is the leader of *Mad Grimshaw*."† The acquisition of Mr. Grimshaw, amply atoned for the loss of Mr. Clayton's countenance and influence; and was a sufficient sanction for his "*men*" to unite with Wm. Darney, and extend their sphere of usefulness.

In the course of the year, Wm. Darney visited Todmorden, Bacup, Mill-End, and Miller-Barn, and was instrumental in raising societies in each of these places; and these societies, with many others, were as well known by the appellation of "*Wm. Darney's Societies*," as Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, &c. were known by the name of "*John Bennet's Round*." Though it has been hazarded as a probable opinion, that Todmorden might have been visited previously to this, by John Bennet, Wm. Darney has the credit of having formed the *first society* in it; nor is this matter of surprize, as neither John Bennet nor David Taylor proceeded further

\* Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 510.

† Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 13.



than the bare ministry of the word,\* till they became acquainted with John Nelson and Mr. Wesley.

Mr. Grimshaw had officiated as a regular clergyman at Todmorden, before he obtained the Living of Haworth; and being respected by the parishioners, it is not improbable, that, on the tidings of his favourable reception of Wm. Darney reaching them,—even on the supposition of his recommendation being wanting, they might also be induced to lend a readier ear to his message: and yet from the intimate connexion of the former with the place, and his desire of general usefulness, it is not difficult to conceive of some secret springs being at work, which might lead him to advise the latter to go and endeavour to enlighten a people whom his own unconverted ministry had left in the dark. Accordingly, we find the humble itinerant in Todmorden and its adjacencies, in the month of May, 1744, and the first notice of his appearance is in a *barn*, at Gauksholm. While delivering the word of life to the people, John Maden, who had been invited to hear from the novelty of the circumstance, and who long afterwards adorned the Christian profession, was first led to the discovery of his deplorable condition by nature. His eyes were suffused with tears, and it was with difficulty he was restrained from crying aloud before the auditory. Wm. Darney continued in the neighbourhood nearly the space of a fortnight, preaching every evening; and though the place was five or six miles from the residence of John Maden, he was never absent. With a view to render his ministerial labours more extensively and permanently beneficial, Wm. Darney united about ten persons into a religious society, in the vicinity of Todmorden, one of whom was John Maden, who was never prevented from giving his weekly attendance during the greater part of twelve months, though resident at the distance specified.

With too much truth it might be said, “The word of the Lord was precious” in those days; for notwithstanding the pulpits that were occupied, opportunities for hearing evangelical discourses rarely occurred. Several weeks occasionally elapsed, in which such exalted privilege could be enjoyed. This produced the greater solicitation in those who had received Christ Jesus the Lord, to have his word proclaimed in their dwellings. Hence, to accommodate such persons, and the public in general, preaching was established

\* Wesley's Works, vol. 11. p. 158. 8vo edit.



in many of their houses, which was the mean of reclaiming sinners from the error of their ways. John Maden, was one among many, who was but partially satisfied with the scanty pittance received at home, and often went to Haworth to hear Mr. Grimshaw, after which he would return home the same evening—the whole constituting a walk of not less than forty miles. This is only a specimen selected from the multitude. It never, however, was permitted to assume the character of labour, for John, on these felicitous occasions, would repeat with transport, while passing over the hills, the language of the Hebrew Seer, “For ye shall go forth with joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” His own bosom being inspired with song, every thing in nature became vocal.

On John Maden joining the Society, near Todmorden, he wished much to have the gospel, as preached by the Methodists, introduced into Rossendale; and with a design to accomplish this object, invited Wm. Darney, who, for the first time in that country, preached at a place called Heap-barn, where he experienced great opposition. A circumstance occurred on the occasion, illustrative of the supreme delight which a christian minister feels, when he meets a prodigal restored to the favour of God by his instrumentality. After W. Darney had proclaimed the word of salvation to the people, he clasped John Maden in his arms, whom he had not seen for a short time, exclaiming, “You are the first-fruits of my labours in this place.” He was next invited to preach at Mellor-barn, where he soon after formed a society, appointing John Maden the leader.\*

In the midst of much opposition, Wm. Darney travelled from place to place, preaching and forming Societies. But he was mentally, as well qualified to brave a storm of persecution, as he was constitutionally fitted for bearing the winter rigour of those regions from whence he came: and few circumstances can better illustrate his character for persevering toil and undaunted courage, than two anecdotes noticed in the Rev. J. Stanley’s memoir of his father.† They are recorded with a touch perfectly graphic; and were it not for

\* Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 523.

† Ibid. 1826, p. 797.

their distance from the scene of action, they, with others, whom the present writer has heard from the lips of the venerable subject of the memoir—who was the guide of his youth, might be adduced to place this rustic itinerant in a light the most interesting, to such as hesitate to pronounce on the cocoa-nut with a bare examination of its rude exterior.

Jonathan Maskew and Paul Greenwood being associated with him in the work, were as destitute as himself of claims to superior birth, parentage, education, or pecuniary circumstances, to induce the rabble to permit them to pass through the toll-bar of persecution without an exaction of costs. The former in particular, had not long engaged in his Master's work, before he was marked out as an object of popular vengeance. In one of the towns where he had frequently attended, he was attacked by a gang of desperadoes, no doubt either instigated or countenanced by those who were ignorantly denominated *their betters*. They seized him, stripped him naked, rolled him in the mud, and carried their injustice to a length, which had nearly deprived him of life. But this was far from interrupting his labours. His zeal, collecting fresh vigour from opposition, and neglecting the timid counsels of "the fearful," he was again seen in a state of buoyancy on the rolling surge; and this flagrant violation of law and of humanity, failed in preventing him from going to the place, to which he was persuaded his conscience and his duty called him; till at last, his enemies, ashamed of their conduct, or deserted by their supporters, left him to his delusions, that is, to call sinners to repentance, and preach,—“Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.”\*

Being the year previous to the Scotch Rebellion, when a great deal of uneasiness existed, and malice—which is ever inventive, and of which there is always a plentiful stock on hand, being in full operation, it was reported of the Methodists, that they were rebels, and that the Preachers were raising men for the Pretender.† This might possibly acquire strength for a time, from the circumstance of Wm. Darney being a Scotchman; but the prevalency of such an opinion was soon checked in its spread, as well as counteracted in its influence, by Mr. Grimshaw's assumption of the itinerant character. He entered the doors which Wm. Darney had thrown open—preached—and regulated the Societies; and

\* Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 511.

† Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 19.

was afterwards considered Mr. Wesley's *Assistant* of the Haworth Circuit. The people could not conceive how that rebels should ever be countenanced by a clergyman of the Establishment; and hence, the odium was soon wiped off, by some of the more reflecting part of the community, saying, "If they were rebels, a Church of England parson would not preach among them." Though it did not preclude the possibility of clerical defection, it was, upon the whole, a fair inference, and was adapted to the times and to the people.

In a state of general agitation, almost every unusual occurrence becomes ominous of great events with the young and superstitious, and is not unfrequently overruled for good to individual salvation. Thus it was with John Morris, afterwards so celebrated in the annals of Methodism in Manchester. "The year before the rebellion," says he, "a comet made its appearance; its awful aspect affected me exceedingly, and I was restrained by fear from pursuing childish follies, which restraint continued upon my mind during the time of the Rebellion."\*

While the persons who have just passed in review, were expending their strength and employing their talents, among a people as uncultivated as the moors they trod, and as bold as the hills over which they were accustomed to pass, John Bennet was anxious for the improvement of the Societies to which he had given rise. In the summer of this year, therefore, he engaged Mr. Wesley to pay one of his "angel visits" to a few of them.

Thursday, June 14th, he remarks, "I accompanied John Bennet into Lancashire. I preached to a small congregation at eleven; in the afternoon, at Woodley, in Cheshire; and in the evening, at Chinley-end, in Derbyshire, on *Repent ye and believe the gospel*. Friday, 15th, I preached at Chinley, at five: about noon, in the Peak, and in the evening, at Barley-hall."†

This is the nearest approach of Mr. Wesley to Manchester, since his visit in 1738; and his not entering the town itself, is confirmatory of the conjecture already hazarded respecting the want of Mr. Clayton's countenance and support, and may be advanced as an argument in favour of Mr. Wesley's unoffending and unobtrusive demeanour, in avoiding that which might otherwise be unacceptable, so long as he

\* Met's. Mag. 1795, p. 19.

† Works, vol. 28, p. 229.



had the loudest calls elsewhere, and there were no encouraging circumstances to invite him to the spot.—As he was in Leeds on the Wednesday, and had rode on horseback from Birstal, on the forenoon of the day he entered “Lancashire,” it cannot be imagined that he penetrated much beyond the precincts of the county. The “small congregation,” therefore, to which he preached “at eleven,” was very likely the one accustomed to hear John Nelson at Hopkin-pit. Mr. Wesley was conducted by the same person, the places appear to have been contiguous to each other, and the one seems to have followed the other in the order of preaching then established. The other place at which he preached “about noon in the Peak,” is equally likely to have been either Chelmorton or Bongs. During one of Mr. Wesley’s early visits to the former of these places, a poor woman having heard of his being in the country, and being unacquainted with the hours of worship, travelled over the mountains to hear him, and arrived at the house of Mr. Marsden about ten o’clock at night. Mr. Marsden informed her that the congregation had long been dismissed, and that Mr. Wesley had retired to rest. These remarks were lost upon a mere creature of feeling; and from the house she was resolved not to remove till she beheld the object of her search. Mr. Marsden stepped up stairs, apologized for disturbing his guest, and explained the cause. Mr. Wesley’s shoes and stockings were off; his neckcloth and clothes were hanging loosely round him; in this plight he hastened down stairs—shook hands with the woman—spoke a few words to her on the subject of personal religion—and bid her “good night.” She left the house as much delighted with the sight of him, as if she had become heiress to an immense estate, and like the bounding roe, ascended the mountain heights, and passed through the deep ravine to her home, as if night had been converted into day, and a world of kindred beings were pacing by her side. Trivial as this circumstance may appear, it involves in it the principal and practice of condescension, and furnishes no mean comment on that part of the christian’s character, which places him in the position of becoming “all things unto all,” for purposes of edification.

In the month of April, the year following, Mr. Wesley again visited the neighbourhood; and if he had been an experienced general, meditating an attack upon the town, he might have been suspected—though perfectly unintentional on his part, of reconnoitring, and of planting his Societies, like bastions mounted with heavy artillery around it, for the



purpose of carrying it by assault, whenever the fitful moment should arrive. But in both cases, John Bennet seems to have been the moving cause of his approach, without any pre-determination of his own.

"Friday and Saturday," he observes—being the 26th and 27th, "at John Bennet's request, I preached at several places in Lancashire and Cheshire. Sunday 28th, I preached at five (as I had done over night) about a mile from Altringham, on, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.* A plain man came to me afterward, and said, 'Sir, I find Mr. Hutchings and you do not preach the same way. You bid us read the bible, and pray, and go to church; but he bids us let this alone: and says, If we go to church and sacrament, we shall never come to Christ.'

"At nine I preached near Stockport to a large congregation. Thence we rode to Bongs in Derbyshire, a lone house, on the side of a high, steep mountain, whither abundance of people were got before us. I preached on God's justifying the ungodly, and his word was as dew upon the tender herb. At five I preached at Mill-town, near Chapel-in-le-Frith. The poor miller, near whose pond we stood, endeavoured to drown my voice, by letting out the water, which fell with a great noise. But it was labour lost; for my strength was so increased, that I was heard to the very skirts of the congregation. Monday 29th, I preached at Taddington in the Peak, and rode from thence to Sheffield."\*

Mr. Hutchings appears to have been imbued with the spirit of *quietism*,—the spirit of which Mr. Ingham, David Taylor, and several attached to the Moravians partook, who were so terribly afraid of a pharisaical dependance upon works, that they proceeded to the opposite extreme, and looked for the blessing without the full exercise of the appointed means. At Bongs, Mr. Wesley and the Preachers were entertained by a person of the name of Turner, who, together with two of his daughters, had been brought to God under the ministry of David Taylor, when David was in the height of his zeal.† Scarcely a higher compliment need be paid to the kindly feelings of Mr. Turner, than to notice, that, in the course of the preceding year, on hearing of the impressment of John Nelson, under whose preaching he had sat, he rode from Bongs, near Stockport, to York, to see him, converse with him, and impart encouragement.

\* Works, vol. 28, p. 275-6.

† Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 19.

On Mr. Wesley's departure, John Bennet was again left alone, with the exception of such partial and precarious aid as other places could spare from their own necessities, or accident threw in his path. It was in the latter way, in the month of June, that a preacher passed over that portion of the vineyard assigned to him, like a cloud travelling over the face of a landscape, dropping its fatness on the earth as it moves along. The evil spirit from the North, which had been conjured into existence, by a single touch of the Pretender's wand, could only be allayed by adding to the numerical force of the army. This afforded a favourable plea for persevering alive the dæmon of persecution. When the enemies of Methodism, therefore, found themselves foiled in their attempts to fasten the blot of conspiracy upon the character of its professors, they veered to another quarter, and concluded that the Preachers would make excellent soldiers, and that the surest mode of extirpation would be, to send them in military array against the Pretender. Two of them had been already secured—John Nelson and Thomas Beard,\* and both churchwardens and constables were in quest of others; one of whom was Richard Moss.

This good man was chased like a stag before the hunters, and his lair—to pursue the metaphor, had scarcely time to cool before the dogs of oppression were upon it. He was closely pursued at Sykehouse, beyond Doncaster. The cry was again awakened at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, the birth-place of Mr. Wesley. It was renewed at Sheffield, after a circuitous route by way of Norton, Leeds, Birstal, and Barley-hall. He then adds, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, "I went from Sheffield through Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire, to Birmingham; and so on by Evesham and Stanley. In most places I was threatened; but out of all dangers, the Lord delivered me."† On referring to this part of his history, in a memoir written by himself, he further observes, "The next day (June 14) I went through Derbyshire to my father's. On Monday 17th, I came to Wednesbury. But the brethren would not suffer me to stay, the constables being resolved to press me. So I went on to Birmingham and Evesham, and on Monday 24th, came safe to Bristol."‡ Whenever a person was marked, like a deer singled out from his fellows, information was sent in every direction, with a descriptive accompaniment: and detection, in the case of

\* Wesley's Works, vol. 227, p. 228. Atmore's Meth. Memorial, p. 46.

† Wesley's Works, vol. 28, p. 310.

‡ Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 59.

Preachers, was generally the more certain, because their very offence—that of preaching, which a tenderly enlightened conscience would not permit them to forego, gave publicity to their characters, and afforded facilities to their enemies for the accomplishment of their malevolent purposes.

The object of their present pursuit, was born in the year 1718, at Hurlston, in the county of Chester. His parents were poor; and his mother dying when he was three years of age, he was taken by his grandfather, by whom he was brought up and to whom he was apprenticed. At the age of nineteen, he went to London, where, as heretofore, he experienced deep awakenings, and indulged freely in dissipation; and considering his years, Dryden's translation of a line of Juvenal, was not inapplicable to the state to which he had attained:

“Vice is at a stand, and at the highest flow.”\*

Just before he had finished his climactrical career in iniquity, he was induced to go and hear Mr. Whitfield preach on Kennington-Common, where a person dropt down dead at his side. He could not have been more appalled, if a thunderbolt had dropt at his feet. Conviction deepened, and at length terminated in a general renewal of nature. He entered the house of Mr. Wesley, at the Foundry, in 1744, in the capacity of a servant; accompanied him to the north in the spring of the present year;† and was there pressed in spirit to give a word of exhortation to the people. His sphere of usefulness was soon enlarged; and after enduring much persecution, and travelling through a considerable part of the kingdom, he was ordained, some time in 1752,‡ by the Bishop of London, as a Missionary for the Island of Providence, one of the Bahama Islands, in the West Indies, where he preached the gospel with success for several years, in company with Mr. Tizard, his fellow labourer, and at length finished his course with joy.††

In the course of the month succeeding Richard Moss's visit, Mr Wesley remarks, “Great was our joy in the Lord at the public reading of the letters. Part of one was as follows:

“Betley, near Namptwich, Aug. 24th, 1745.

“I rejoice that the Lord stirs you up more and more, to labour in his vineyard. I am persuaded, it is not a small matter, whether we speak or let it alone. If I go into any

\* Omne in præcipiti vitium stetit.—*Sat. I.*

† Wesley's Works, vol. 28, p. 259.

‡ Myle's Chron. Hist. p. 448.

†† Meth. Mag. 1798, p. 59.



company, and there be an opportunity to reprove or exhort, and I come away without using it, I am as much condemned in my conscience, as if I had robbed them. Pray for me, that I may have patience to endure the contradiction of sinners, and that I may always remember, the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

“Sunday, Aug. 4. We met as usual. As soon as we had begun prayer, there came the curate, with a lawyer. He staid till we had done prayer, and then asked, ‘What is the intent of your meeting?’ I answered, ‘To build each other up in our most holy faith.’ He said, ‘But what method do you use?’ I answered, ‘This is the third Sunday that I have met these my brethren. The first Sunday we read the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, and exhorted one another, to follow after the holiness and happiness there described. Last Sunday we considered the sixth. And now, if we are not hindered, we shall go on to the seventh.’ He bad us, ‘Go on; and he would stay a little and hear us.’ By the desire of the rest, I read the chapter, which I had scarce done, when the lawyer began a long harangue, concerning the danger we were in of running mad. I answered, ‘Sir, as I perceive you have no design to help us, if you will not hinder us, we shall take it as a favour.’ He went out directly, and left the curate with us, who began to exhort us, not to be over anxious about our salvation, but to divert ourselves a little. I told him, ‘Sir, we desire whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God.’ ‘What, said he, do you deny all diversions?’ I said, ‘All which do not agree with that rule.’ He hurried away, and said, as he went, ‘I wish you do not fall into some error.’

“The following week, grievous threatenings were given out, of what we should suffer if we met again. On Friday 9th, a gentleman sent for me, and told me, he would hire a mob, to pull the house down; for we were the most disturbing dogs in the nation. I said, ‘Sir, if there be a disturbance now, it will lie at *your* door. A few of us intend to meet on Sunday, after sermon, to encourage one another in serving God. You say, if we do, you will have the house pulled down. And then you will say, we have *made* the disturbance!’ He said, he would send for me another time, and would have an hour’s discourse with me.

“On Sunday the man at whose house we were to meet, was warned by his landlady, not to receive us; for if he did, the house would surely be pulled down. However, he did receive us. A great many people coming about the house,



he told them, if they had a mind they might come in: so they came in, as many as the house would hold. I told them all the design of our meeting. Then we prayed, and I read the first chapter of St. James, and spoke a little on those words, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.* And two more of our brethren testified, by their own experience, that he is a God of truth. They stood as dumb men, till we had done, nor did one afterward open his mouth against us.

“From this time we have been threatened more and more, especially by the gentry, who say they will send us all for soldiers. Nevertheless, on Sunday 18th, we had a quiet and comfortable meeting. We considered the third chapter of the first epistle of St. Peter, which was the evening lesson for the day. We were thankful for the record that is there left us, of the treatment we are to meet with. And we are all much humbled, that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of Christ.

“I have been ill this fortnight, having got a great cold, but am obliged to keep it to myself as much as I can: because a person cannot have the very form of godliness, but if he is sick, that is the cause of it. I seem not to desire life or death, but that the will of God may be done.”\*

It is possible that Richard Moss might be the remote means of originating these meetings. He was well known in Middlewich, and a considerable distance round it;† he was at his father’s house about the 15th and 16th of June; the first meeting commenced on the 14th of the month following; and not any notice is taken of preaching, either occasional or established, beyond what they seem to have heard in the Establishment. Thus, another partially prepared plot of ground seemed waiting to receive the incorruptible seed of the word, which John Bennet was scattering into the furrows, that the Divine Being was turning up in the order of his providence.

\* Works, vol. 28, p. 311.

† Meth. Mag. 1793, p. 6.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Mr. Wesley's visit into Cheshire—Scotch Rebellion—Richard Bradley—John Maden deserted in Rossendale—Mr. John Butternorth joins the Society, his conversion and call to the ministry—Persecution at Colne—John Jane put into the stocks—Mr. Wesley again passes over part of the ground—Mrs. Holmes—Skircoat-green, near Halifax—Abraham Kershaw—Robert Swindels exercises his gifts at Woodley—The work spreads in Cheshire—Letter from John Bennet—Chester—Rochdale—Holme—Persecution continued—Mr. Charles Wesley's arrival in Manchester, his interview with Mr. Clayton—Richard Barlow—The first preaching-room in Manchester—A society formed—Another visit by Mr. John Wesley, who preaches at Keighly, Ha-worth, Skircoat-green, Halifax, Roughlee, Widdap, Shore, Todmorden-edge, Rossendale, Salford-Cross, Davy-hulme, Booth-bank, Old-field-brow, Congleton, Macclesfield, Stabley-hall, Bongs, and Chinley—Mrs. Alice Cross.*

**MR. WESLEY**, who had hitherto visited the neighbourhood of Manchester, as an itinerant preacher, through the pressing invitation of others, soon began to pay attention to it from a sense of duty, and accordingly entered it into his places of visitation. The first of these self-determined and regular visits appears to have been in the month of November, where he stands in a perfectly unassociated form. A paragraph, with which his visit is ushered into notice, will shew the state of the country at the time.

“ Before nine we met several expresses sent to countermand the march of the army into Scotland, and to inform them that the rebels had passed the Tweed, and were marching southward.

“ Thursday, 7th, I rode to Stabley-hall in Cheshire, after many interruptions in the way, by those poor tools of watchmen, who stood with great solemnity, at the end of almost every village. I preached there on Mark 1, 15, and rode on to Bradbury-green.

“ Friday 8th, understanding that a neighbouring gentleman, Dr. C. had affirmed to many, ‘ That Mr. Wesley was now with the Pretender near Edinburgh,’ I wrote him a few lines: it may be he will have a little more regard to truth or shame, for the time to come.

“ About noon, I preached near Maxfield; in the evening, at the Black-house. Saturday 9th. In the afternoon, we came to Penkridge, and lit on a poor drunken, cursing, swearing landlord, who seemed scarce to think there was either God or devil. But I had spoke very little, when his countenance changed, and he was so full of his thanks and blessings, that I could hardly make an end of my sentence.”\*

Stabley-hall, Bradbury-green, and Back-house, may be considered as so many additional places at which preaching had been established; and Mr. Wesley having visited some of the older stations during his preceding tour, appears on his route to have passed them, and to have acted the part of a father, in stretching forth his hand, in order to aid the infantile steps of such as were less able to support themselves.

Richard Bradley, whose portrait is prefixed to this work, was at this time a stout boy, inhaling the healthful breeze on Longbridge Fell,† while driving the plough; and saw a part of the English army on their march, when proceeding to meet the Scotch rebels. Some of the soldiers were entertained at his father’s house, though a Roman Catholic, and very inimical to government. As yet, Methodism had not reached the Fell, but like the army, was on its march in that direction: and if we return to Rossendale Forest—a district extending from the township of Eccleshill to that of Bacup, which was then the nearest seat of Methodism to it, we shall find the face of the landscape darkened, and a cloud bursting on the head of John Maden.

The stability of this young convert was tried in a way he had not anticipated. To the amount of nearly twelve persons, who had regularly attended the ministry of the word, and other means of grace, and of whose salvation he had a good hope, suddenly abandoned him; some relapsing into their former profane habits, while others imbibed the delusive tenets of the Antinomians. But, though thus circumstanced, the language of his heart was, “ I will never forget thy statutes; for by them thou hast quickened me.” He stood like a rock in the midst of “ ocean solitude.” Still, though firm and alone, he was not without hope, that when

\* Works, vol. 28, p. 339.

† A mountain three miles north of Ribchester.

*Seng*

the tempest should subside and the waters should lower, others would make their appearance, and by shewing their summits, would gladden his heart and encircle his form. To hasten so desirable an object, he entered upon a farm, and received the preachers into his house. He then had an opportunity of more closely observing the piety of those who ministered in holy things; some of the most early of whom were Messrs. Darney, Larwood,\* and Colbeck. He made a pulpit, and employed his influence to induce people to hear the word, which had proved "spirit and life" to his own soul. Another house was taken, which soon proved too small to contain the increasing congregation. The Society was then accommodated for a short time, with the use of the Baptists' meeting-house.†

Among others who joined the Methodist Society in Rossendale, in its infancy, was the late Rev. John Butterworth, of Coventry, the author of a valuable Concordance, re-edited by Dr. Adam Clarke, and father of the late Joseph Butterworth, Esq. M. P. who was long a distinguished member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, in the metropolis. Mr. John Butterworth, was born Dec. 13, 1727, at Goodshaw Chapel, a village in Rossendale. His parents were deeply pious; and, on account of their friendly catholic spirit, were greatly respected by serious people of all denominations. John was one of five sons, all of whom were truly devoted to God, and three of whom, in addition to himself, were, in process of time, called to the ministry, and appointed to the pastoral office, by respective Baptist churches. Several interesting particulars are stated by him in a manuscript, dated March 7, 1800. He was taught at the school, and sate under the ministry of Mr. Crossley, a popular calvinist preacher, who had been personally acquainted with John Bunyan. After the death of Mr. Crossley, he attended the ministry of Mr. Ashworth, a Baxterian; and had to walk over the mountains with his parents to the place of worship,—a regular distance of two miles, and occasionally four or five. His first acquaintance with the Wesleyan body, is thus stated by himself.

"We had frequently heard of the Methodists, and read of their preaching in the fields; and particularly that Mr. Whitfield often preached to 10,000 people, or more, at Blackheath, and other places. He had indeed some correspondence, by letter, with Mr. Crossley. About this time

\* See Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, for Mr. Larwood, p. 36.

† Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 524.



(i. e. 1745) they came into our country. Mr. Wesley was published to preach near New Church, in Rossendale, at five o'clock one morning. I went to hear him: he had a numerous auditory, and preached from Rom. 3, 22. 'For there is no difference,' &c. I was struck with his discourse, and became a constant hearer of the Methodists when they came their rounds; and also attended their private meetings;—yet I still attended Mr. Ashworth's ministry at other times." He then proceeds with a detail of the operations of the Spirit of God upon his heart, and adds, "The same night, after these workings of mind, I went to hear one John Nelson, a Methodist preacher: a man who had gone through much persecution, had been pressed for a soldier; but notwithstanding many threatenings, maintained his integrity, and often reproved both men and officers for their profanity; and, in time, obtained his discharge. He preached from Matt. 8, 2, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' He possessed much solidity and zeal; and many were affected under his discourse. I thought they all seemed more affected than myself; that the discourse seemed to have no good effect upon me. The hardness of my heart had already been my trouble; and because of which all the sermons I had heard were ineffectual. I returned home with a heavy spirit, crying to God that he would take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh." He further observes, "The doctrine of assurance of faith, and of knowing our sins pardoned, was much insisted upon by the Methodist preachers. This I wanted to know, for I was not certain that I was a subject of grace; but I determined to be in the way of earnest prayer, and attendance on all the means in my power.

On obtaining the assurance for which he sought, and on which the Methodist Preachers so strenuously insisted, he continues, "About this time I had strong desires of preaching Christ to my fellow sinners; and many thoughts occupied my mind how I could reason with them respecting the deceitfulness, absurdity, and danger of sin, and the excellency, importance, and happiness of godliness. Accordingly, I prayed to the Lord to give me grace and talents for the important work, and at times I spoke a few words at our private prayer-meetings; but had no idea, at that time, of being tried and regularly called out by an orderly church of Christ, being then among the Methodists. I had, indeed, been baptized by Mr. Ashworth, but did not design to be a

member of his Church, as I apprehended that little of the life and power of religion was amongst them; but having a strong desire to speak of the things I believed and had experienced, I informed a few friends that I would carry on a meeting, at my father's house next Lord's day in the afternoon. More people came than I expected; however, with much diffidence, I attempted to speak from John 6, 40. Before I had finished, my father and mother came from their meeting, much surprized to find me preaching: I was invited to preach again in the evening, about a mile distant, and I complied. These words had been impressed upon my mind: 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' 1. Pet. 4. 10."

Mr. Wesley's visit into Rossendale, of which Mr. Butterworth takes notice, must have been subsequent to the date with which it stands connected, as his Journals testify it was not till some time after this, that he preached in that country: the date of 1745, therefore, must refer to the introduction of Methodism into the Forest, which is in perfect accordance with other documents attesting its first appearance to be "*about*" the period specified. In John Nelson's Journal, there is an account of only the most remarkable incidents connected with his personal history, with a very partial reference to dates; and as it is probable that nothing very extraordinary distinguished this journey, it is entirely omitted in his pages. It is likely, however, to have taken place soon after his release from military captivity, as there appears to be a portion of time but partially accounted for, between his release and his route to London at the solicitation of Mr. Wesley.\*

Mr. Butterworth was at length gradually led to separate from the Methodists, and to attach himself to the Calvinists. The Baptist Church in Coventry being in want of a pastor, and hearing a flattering account of him, they invited him in the year 1751, to pay them a visit. He was approved of, and in due time accepted the call; was ordained to the pastoral office, and, after having preached upwards of fifty years to them, died full of faith and good works, April 24th, 1803, in the 76 year of his age. Dr. Adam (then Mr.) Clarke, preached his funeral sermon, on the evening of May 6th, from 1. Cor. 15, 55, 57.† Thus, the Methodists were in

\* Journal 170—173.

† Evangel. Mag. 1804, p. 249.

some way connected with this good man, both in his opening prospects, and at the closing scene of his earthly pilgrimage.

Though Messrs. Darney, Greenwood, and Maskew, had in some measure prepared the way for the more easy introduction of the gospel into places which they had not actually visited, and for which they had really no leisure, yet others resisted all immediate approach. Colne,\* already named, was strongly garrisoned by a set of turbulent spirits; and such was their determined opposition, that a mere straggler from the little religious bands around, was sufficient to excite a commotion among the populace. The circumstances of the case had been unknown, but for an incidental notice, by Mr. Wesley, in his *Journal of 1776*.† “In the evening,” he observes, “I preached in a kind of square, at Colne, to a multitude of people, all drinking in the word. I scarcely ever saw a congregation wherein men, women, and children stood in such a posture; and this is the town, wherein thirty years ago no Methodist could shew his head! The first that preached here was John Jane, who was innocently riding through the town, when the zealous mob pulled him off his horse, and put him in the stocks! He seized the opportunity, and vehemently exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come.”

John Jane is stated‡ to have been a man of “simplicity, integrity, and uprightness,” and to have died “in the midst of his days.” His exit, according to Mr. Myles,|| took place in 1750; and if so, it must have occurred after the month of March, as towards the close of that month, he is represented as having “travelled from Bristol to Holy-head, with three shillings in his pocket, and had one penny left,”—§ a case not uncommon in the infancy of the work, to support which, not only the preachers, but many of the inferior agents employed, were called upon to exhibit some rare instances of penury and pedestrianism. Not long after he had delivered his discourse from the stocks, the blow was followed up by John Nelson, who preached in a part of the town called Ninevah. It was there that John Dean, then a boy, and yet living (1827) in the neighbourhood of Colne, first heard him. The venerable man, when conversing with the writer respecting “departed days,” represented John Nelson as “a powerful man, with broad shoulders,” and as having contracted a habit of winking, when he was about to advance any thing

\* About 30 miles N. N. E. of Manchester.

† Works, vol. 33, p. 10, for 1776. ‡ Atmore's Mem. p. 217. || Chron. Hist. p. 447.

‡ Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 92.



pithy." From Nineveh, the place of preaching was removed successively to two other houses, at each of which—probably from hostile causes, the residence was of a short duration. The next remove was to Dent-back, where a large room was occupied, with the separate apartments of two or three families underneath. A person of the name of Richard Lancaster, originally from Gisbourne, was the first that received and entertained the preachers in Colne.

In the month of February, the year following, Mr. Wesley touched on the skirts of the societies in these parts. "Friday 21," says he, "we breakfasted at Bradbury-green: whence we rode on to Marsden, and the next day, Sat. 22, to Leeds.—Monday 24, I preached at Skircoat-green, near Halifax, to a whole company of quakers. The good man of the house, about four-score years old, had formerly been a speaker among them. But from fear of man, he desisted, and so quenched the spirit, that he was in darkness for near forty years: till hearing John Nelson declare the love of God in Christ, light again sprung up in his soul.—In the evening I preached to a quiet congregation, at Bradford. Tuesday 25, about nine, I began at Keighly. Then, (finding the snow was so deep, I could not go through the vales,) I went the straight way, and came to Newcastle, Wednesday 26."\*

When Mr. Wesley visited the neighbourhood of Halifax in 1742, since which period till now he had not been there, it was in consequence of an invitation from Mrs. Holmes, of Smithhouse, at Lightcliffe; during which visit, he spent some time also with Dr. Leigh, Vicar of Halifax, whom he entitled a "Candid inquirer after truth." Mrs. Holmes was then apparently the only person in that neighbourhood, who ventured to brave the obliquy and hostility of the times. But she was elevated both by providence and grace beyond the ordinary reach of the vulgar, possessing, with unquestionable piety, considerable property. She erected a building for the convenience and support of the Moravians, which is still standing, and which they continued to occupy till the time of her death, in 1781. Her residence was about four miles from Halifax, and was open for the reception of christian ministers of every denomination.

On the present occasion, Smithhouse was omitted, and Skircoat-green, a mile south of Halifax, was the scene of operation. The old gentleman, at whose house Mr. Wesley preached, was Abraham Kershaw; and it is to his daughter



Mr. Wesley refers, when he says, "I baptized Elizabeth K.\* one of the Quakers." This female, previously to this, had invited John Bennet† to preach in the village, through whose instrumentality a Society had been raised; and it was owing to an invitation from the members of that society, that Mr. Wesley paid the present visit. The house in which he preached, may still be seen on the side of the hill, between Skircoat-green and Copley Hall, and was formerly a Roman Catholic Chapel, to which a burial ground was attached.

In again directing the attention to the societies more immediately in the neighbourhood of Manchester, appearances of rather a flattering character begin to exhibit themselves. Robert Swindels, who was connected with the society at Woodley, had acted for some time in the capacity of a Local Preacher, and afterwards entered the itinerant life, in which he long adorned the christian character as well as the ministerial office. While in these parts, and especially at such a time, his labours were stamped with the value of choice gold in a season of scarcity. John Bennet too, continued to exercise all his energies in the good cause. The following letter, which Mr. Wesley prefaces with "Some account of the beginning of the present work of God in Cheshire and Lancashire," affords an interesting picture to the contemplative eye of the christian.

"Chinley, March 7th, 1746—7.

"Sir,

"This day I have given Mr. *Charles Wesley* a particular account of the Societies in *Derbyshire*, *Cheshire*, and *Lancashire*, according to his request.

"His coming was not in vain. Surely a little cloud of witnesses are arisen amongst us, who received the word of reconciliation under his ministry. I trust God will send you also hither, to water the good seed of his word.

"Last week I spent three days in and about *Chester*, and the word was gladly received. I am assured, that the time is come that the gospel must be preached in that city. The inhabitants received me gladly, and said, 'We have heard of *Wesley*, and read his books: why could you not have come hither sooner?' They also desired that I would write immediately, and entreat you to come up thither also.

\* Works vol. 29, p. 31.

† Mr. Hutton, who has drawn up a short sketch of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax &c. gives Mr. C. Hopper the credit of aiding in the formation of the Society, anterior to Mr. Wesley's visit, p. 6. but by looking into his memoirs, it will be ascertained that he did not leave the north till 1749. Meth Mag. 1781 p. 90.

I expounded at a town four miles from *Chester*, where several of our friends (unknown to you) came to hear me. A little Society is begun near *Namptwich*, and they have got your hymn-books, &c. *These long to see you.*

“The manner I proceeded at *Chester* was as followeth : I heard a religious society was kept in the city, and so I made an inquiry, and found them out ; upon which I was desired to preach, and afterwards pressed to stay longer, or visit them again. I think your way is plain and open into these parts. I desire, if you can, you will allow yourself some time, and visit them in your return from the north. If you intend so to do, please to let me know in time, that I may give notice ; for the people will come from each quarter.

“Some young men in *Manchester* (that spoke with Mr. *Charles* when he was with us last) have begun a Society, and took a room, and have subscribed their names in a letter to Mr. *Charles*, desiring you will own them as brethren, and visit them in your return. They also desire any of us *Helpers* in the gospel may call on them. I have sent their letter to *London*.—Dear Sir, do not forget us.

“I have been at *Rochdale* some few times since Mr. *Charles* was there, and begun a little Society. The town is alarmed, and in prospect of much opposition, notwithstanding the word is gladly received, and multitudes flock to hear. This town is eight miles from *Manchester*, directly in your way from *Yorkshire*.

“On Monday the 2nd of this instant, as I was expounding in *John Heywood's* house at *Holme*, five miles from *Manchester*, a band of wicked, drunken men, with clubs and staves, having a petty steward of a neighbouring gentleman at their head as captain or leader, and gathering together by the blowing of a horn, came and assaulted the house, breaking the windows, pulling the *thatch* off some part of the house. I was obliged to leave off expounding, and we fell on our knees and prayed. The shouts and acclamations for some time abated, and I spoke to the people again. No sooner had I begun, but the bells at *Eccles* and *Flixton* began to ring, and then they broke into the house. I was directed to go away to a friend's house, which I did, and so escaped their malice. I found such solid peace as I never had done before in trouble. It is not in the power of men or devils to interrupt a man's peace a moment, that looks with a single eye to God.

“I am, your unworthy Brother and Son in the Gospel,  
JOHN BENNET.”

“P. S. I must confess, that I lately looked upon man as a mere machine. And whoever considers man as such, cannot possibly escape falling into the doctrine of *Reprobation* and *Election*. I looked upon man in this light, from reading some authors, which has caused me many an uneasy hour: I wish all my young brethren may escape this *place of torment*. Unguarded expressions which we have used in our exhortations, have given rise to the Calvinistic doctrine, as also to Antinomianism.”\*

To have been able to present the reader with a copy of the letter which the “young men” put into the hands of Mr. Charles Wesley, with their respective signatures affixed to it, and which John Bennet forwarded to London, would have afforded as supreme a delight to the writer, as the names of the chartered few would have been beheld with curiosity and interest by the multitudes who have followed in their train, and who also have had their names enrolled among the living in Jerusalem: and it is hoped, that not one of them will be wanting, when the Judge of all the earth “writeth up the people.” The number must have been extremely small indeed, otherwise Mr. Richard Barlow must have had his name recorded; for “A few months before his death,” says the Rev. George Marsden, “I had an opportunity of conversing with him respecting the state of Methodism in Manchester in his early days; he dwelt on the subject with delight, and informed me that when he joined the society, there were but *fourteen* or *fifteen* members in the whole town.”† As the natural construction to be put upon the phrase—“joined the society,” must rather refer to the society in Manchester, than to his union with the Methodists as a body, it should seem that he was not at the *formation*, but only one who immediately added to the number after its establishment.

It is not a little remarkable, that Mr. CHARLES WESLEY should have the credit of giving the name to the *first* METHODIST SOCIETY in *Manchester*, abstracted from that raised up by Mr Clayton, whose members were more intimately connected with the church; and the more so, as John Nelson had obtained the precedency of him in the town, and Mr. John Wesley and John Bennet had appeared with the seed basket of eternal truth in their hands in the neighbourhood. But as the “young men” seem to have been volunteers in the work—to have “spoken” to Mr. Charles—“begun a society”—and taken “a Room,” all that he had to do was, to

\* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 472.

† Ibid. 1819 p. 695.



receive "their names," and, in connexion with his brother John, to "own them as brethren." This, he appears to have done, and Mr. John Wesley was with them in person as soon as circumstances would admit.

It may be presumed, that Mr. Charles Wesley was at Chinley, in Derbyshire, when John Bennet wrote, as the latter dates his letter from thence, and states the account to have been delivered to the former on the same "day:" and it is no less correct, that this was his second visit to the neighbourhood, if not the town of Manchester itself. It was in the course of the *first* visit, that the "young men" *spoke* to Mr Charles—for it was "when he was with us *last*;" and before he again appeared, they had taken a *room* and *commenced* their *meetings*; but were unorganized and without a leader. The expression, however, "when he was with us last," sets the mind afloat, like a vessel pushed off from the shore, and we are as much out at sea as John Bennet was out from his home when engaged in his "round." John Bennet's "*with us*," is as extensive in its application as the societies which he had formed and regularly visited. But Mr. Charles Wesley, in passing from place to place, very likely took Manchester in his way; and this seems to be supported by the expression—"Some young men *in* Manchester—not *from* it, and entering into conversation with him in its vicinity.

Much useful and curious information has been lost to the Methodist body, in consequence of Mr. Charles Wesley not adopting the plan of his brother John, in keeping a regular Journal. The public might, in such case, have been furnished with an account of his interview with his old collegiate friend, Mr. Clayton; though not perhaps with his own mode of address. When not officiating himself, he invariably, as well as Mr. John, attended the service of the Established Church: and as preaching was unknown in "church hours" in the early days of Methodism, he went to hear his friend Mr. Clayton, and to receive the elements of bread and wine at his hand. This, as there had been no formal breach between them, and the courtesies of ancient friendship would naturally lead to an early interview—in whatever place it might occur, or whatever the character it might sustain, was probably during one or other of the visits noticed by John Bennet. At the close of the service, they approached each other; but there was something in Mr. Clayton's manner and address, which drew from Charles a sentiment expressive of the change which he perceived to have taken place, and in the language of the patriarch, ac-



costed him, while stedfastly looking at him,—“The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” The mild intonations of the voice were still heard, but the spirit was gone which produced in earlier days the cordial grasp. There was no corresponding chord between the hand and the heart, to vibrate to the notes of old friendship; and to grasp the hand without a return, was to Charles—what it must be to any man of spirit, like shaking hands with the dead. The exquisite sensibility of Charles was put to the test, and it was thus that he gave expression to his feelings. He recollected the time when they took “sweet counsel” together—when they espoused the same cause—bore the same reproach—and witnessed the same confession; he recollected too, that Mr. Clayton’s pulpit was of easy access to his brother, till other churches were denied him, on account of his zeal for the salvation of perishing thousands; and it was no doubt a review of these things, which occasioned him, in the warmth of his feelings, to draw from its scabbard this two-edged sword—“The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” There is evidently what may be termed a *double entendre*. Charles looked two ways—at the past and the present—and the employment of such a weapon evinces as much dexterity as keenness.

The *Room* which was taken by the “young men,” and in which the *first* METHODIST SOCIETY, connected with the itinerant system, worshipped, has been a matter of curious research with many for several years. The most authentic information that can be obtained, may be collected from what follows. Mr. Marsden, who had his information from Mr. R. Barlow, states, that “The place in which they had preaching was a small room in a house near the river Irwell,” and that “a person lived in the room, where she had her spinning-wheel, her coals, her bed, chairs, and table.”\* Mr. Hopper calls it “A little garret by the river side,” and affirms that he “preached” in it.† After the erection of Oldham-street Chapel, Mr. Hopper, when preaching at one of the Conferences, took occasion to congratulate the friends by adverting to early times, and shewed the progress which the cause had made in Manchester. Those who heard him, and communicated the fact to the writer, intimated that the impression produced was powerful. Surrounded by the Preachers, and by some who had witnessed the first Room, he observed, “You have here what may be considered a

\* Meth. Mag. 1819, p. 695.

† Ibid. 1781, p. 90.

noble edifice, and have now become a great people; but I recollect the period when you were few in number. When I first made my entrance among you, I preached in an old garret that overhung the river, in the neighbourhood of the old bridge. The coals were in one corner of the room—the looms in another—and I was in danger of breaking my neck in getting up to it. When the congregation was collected the first evening, it did not consist of more than from twenty to thirty persons.” His solemn improvement of the subject soon toned down any lighter feeling which the quaint expression of *breaking his neck* was calculated to excite. There is in each of these accounts, an agreement as it regards the place, and *looms* might be added to the *spinning-wheel* in 1749, when Mr. Hopper occupied the garret. In all this, however, there is not a single hand to direct to the identical spot. Dr. Townley observes in a letter to the writer, that Mrs. Bennet informed him, that “The room was near Blackfriar’s Bridge:” and this is consonant with a circumstantial account which has been furnished by a person of the name of Thomas Berry, whose parents lived in the house at the time, and who himself first drew the vital air within its walls.

“The site of the house,” says he, “was a rock on the bank of the Irwell, exactly over the main sewer, excavated out of the solid stone, through which the water pours itself into the river. It is on the north side of Blackfriar’s Bridge, immediately adjoining it. This is a remarkable circumstance by which its precise situation may ever be known. The house itself stood at the bottom of a large yard, known at that time by the name of the ‘Rose and Crown yard,’ which name was derived from a public house at the top of it, whose sign-board had those representations, and whose front looked into Deansgate. The entrances to it were two,—the one of which was the ‘Rose and Crown’ entry, leading out of Deansgate, the door of the public-house being on the right hand,—and the other at the bottom of the yard, on the left hand, which came out beside the ‘Ring of Bells’ public-house, whose back part entered the yard, and stood near the top of the steps leading to the old Blackfriar’s Bridge. There were a number of wood-built cottages, partly thatched, on each side of the yard; but the house in which the room was occupied for preaching, was built of brick, three stories high, slated on the roof, and had a cellar in the back part of it, which was towards the river, and which cellar was for the use of the respective tenants. The ground floor was occupied as a joiner’s shop; the two rooms in the middle story, by my father and mother, who had

not been long married; and the garret by the person who allowed the use of it for preaching, who worked with Mr. Richard Barlow, Packer, Market-street, and afterwards, through a kind providence, acquired considerable property in the cotton line. My father's name was James Berry, and was a Fustian-shearer by trade. The garret was generally well filled, when there was preaching; and I have heard my mother say, that she was often afraid of the roof falling through, for one of the main beams was very much cracked. Mr. Hopper, and others, used to preach in it. My father left the house in 1760, the interior of which was afterwards burnt, but again repaired and occupied as a dwelling-house. Sometime about 1805, it was taken down, together with the other houses, and a number of warehouses, which go by the name of "*Bateman's Buildings*," were erected in their stead. No. 10, at the bottom of the yard, occupies the site of the old preaching house. The principal entrance is through a gateway, leading into Deansgate; though there is another on the right hand, as we proceed to Blackfriar's Bridge. It was with pleasure that I heard Mr. Hopper refer to the old house, several years after, when preaching before the Conference."

This description is too minute to have been given by any one, except by a person who was writing from his own knowledge of the subject; and the accounts, as a whole, are like so many rays of light verging to one point. The only apparent difference, of any importance, is that which adds a male inhabitant to the garret; but this is an improvement rather than a contradiction. One circumstance which must not be omitted is, that the house stood upon *parsonage ground*; and thus, not like the guilty flying for sanctuary to the altar, but to employ a more homely simile, like a few scared rooks—for they were persecuted by the hand, and blackened by the tongue—yes, like a few scared rooks—winging their upward way to the highest towers of some of our ancient abbeys, the "young men" who subscribed their names to Methodism, took religious refuge in the uppermost story of this old building, which was nodding over the cliff whose base was washed by the Irwell, where their cries pierced the heavens, and they were less exposed to the din and gaze of the vulgar, than they otherwise would have been, provided they had made the selection of a ground-floor. Hence, the Methodists in Manchester, cannot only exult in having a Fellow of the Old Collegiate Church for the first professor of their principles, and of receiving, by a



formal acknowledgement, their title from a regular clergyman, but of taking up their first residence on ground connected with the ministers of the Establishment. For the clergy, therefore, wilfully to oppose the Wesleyan Methodists, or the Wesleyan Methodists to oppose the clergy in such a town, would appear almost as ungracious and as unnatural, as for children of the same parent to rise up in rebellion against each other, on the reception of their respective patrimonies.

A Society being now formed, and a room taken, we find Mr. Wesley on his way to the town in the month of April.

"Thursday 30," says he, "I rode to Keighley. The ten persons I joined here are increased to above a hundred. And above a third of them can rejoice in God, and walk as becomes the gospel.

"Friday, May 1, I read prayers and preached in Haworth church, to a numerous congregation. In the evening I preached near Skircoat-green. Sept. 2, I preached at Halifax, to a civil, senseless congregation.

"Monday 4. At his earnest request I began examining W. D's. (Darney's) Societies. At three I preached at Great Harding; in the evening at Roughlee; where there *was* a large society. But since the men of smooth tongue broke in upon them, they are every man afraid of his brother: half of them ringing continually in the ears of the rest, 'No works, no law, no bondage.' However, we gathered above forty of the scattered sheep, who are still minded to stand in the old paths.

Tuesday 5. I preached at Roughlee at five: about eleven at Hinden, and about three at Widdap, a little village in the midst of huge, barren mountains, where also there *was* a society. But Mr. B. had effectually dispersed them, so that I found but three members left.

"We rode thence about five miles to Stonesey-gate, which lies in a far more fruitful country. Here was a larger congregation at six o'clock than I had seen since my leaving Birstal. They filled both the yard and the road to a considerable distance, and many were seated on a large wall adjoining; which being built of loose stones, in the middle of the sermon, all fell down at once. I never saw, heard, nor read of such a thing before. The whole wall and the persons sitting upon it, sunk down together, none of them screaming out, and very few altering their posture. And not one was hurt at all; but they appeared sitting at the bottom, just as they sat at the top. Nor was there any in-



terruption either of my speaking, or of the attention of the hearers.

"Wednesday 6. I rode to Shore, four miles south from Stonesey, lying about half way down an huge, steep mountain. Here I preached at twelve to a loving, simple-hearted people. We then climbed up to Todmorden-edge, the brow of a long chain of mountains, where I called a serious people to *Repent and believe the gospel*.

"Thursday 7. We left the mountains, and came down to the fruitful valley of Rossendale. Here I preached to a large congregation of wild men; but it pleased God to hold them in chains. So that even when I had done, none offered any rudeness, but all went quietly away.

"We came to Manchester between one and two. I had no thought of preaching here, till I was informed John Nelson had given public notice, that I would preach at one o'clock. I was now in a great strait. Their house would not contain a tenth part of the people. And how the unbroken spirits of so large a town would endure preaching in the street, I knew not. Besides that having rode a swift trot for several hours, and in so sultry a day, I was both faint and weary. But after considering that I was not going a warfare at my own cost, I walked straight to Salford-cross. A numberless crowd of people partly ran before, partly followed after me. I thought it best not to sing, but looking round asked abruptly, 'Why do you look as if you had never seen me before?' Many of you have seen me in the neighbouring church, both preaching and administering the sacrament.' I then began, *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near*. None interrupted us at all, or made any disturbance, till as I was drawing to a conclusion, a big man thrust in, with three or four more, and bad them 'Bring out the engine.' Our friends desired me to remove into a yard just by; which I did, and concluded in peace.

"About six we reached Davy-hulme, five miles from Manchester, where I was much refreshed both in preaching and meeting the society. Their neighbours here used to disturb them much. But a Justice of peace, who feared God, granting them a warrant for the chief of the rioters, from that time they were in peace.

"Friday 8. I preached at Oldfield-brow, to a much larger congregation, though many of them had been hurt by doubtful disputations. But they now began again to take root downward and bear fruit upward.

“ In the evening I preached at Booth-bank, among a quiet and loving people. But a famous Baptist teacher, Joseph Pickup, by name, had lately occasioned some disturbance among them. He had given them a particular account of a conference he had had with me on the road; ‘What he said, and what I said: and how he had stopt my mouth with the seventeenth article.’ In the morning, I told them the plain fact. I had overtook him on the road, and we rode half a bow-shot together, but did not exchange five sentences till we parted.

“ About noon I preached at Mr. Anderton’s, North-wich: several of the gay and rich were there: I continued praying and talking with them, till past two. We were then obliged to take horse for Astbury.

“ Here likewise I found an open door, though many fine people were of the congregation. But they behaved as people fearing God; as seriously as the poor ploughmen.

“ Sunday 10. I preached at Astbury, at five: and at seven, proclaimed at Congleton-cross, *Jesus Christ, our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* It rained most of the time that I was speaking. But that did not hinder abundance of people from quietly attending. Between twelve and one I preached near Macclesfield, and in the evening, at Woodley-green.

“ Monday 11. I preached at noon, about a mile from Ashton, and in the evening at Stahley-hall. Tuesday 12. I rode to Bongs, and explained to a serious people, the parable of the prodigal son. In the evening, I exhorted them at Chinley, *Earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints.*

“ Wednesday 13. I preached at noon, in the High-peak, and in the evening, at Sheffield.”\*

“ The men of smooth tongue,” to whom Mr. Wesley refers, and who had injured the Societies at Roughlee and Widdap, appear to have been the same persons who had produced such serious effects in the Society with which John Maden was connected, in drawing them over to Antinomianism.—Roughlee, which is about three miles west of Colne, is one of those places in which there was a Society long before any existed in Colne.—At Keighley, the work must have been rather of an extraordinary character, and could not but produce a considerable sensation in the town; for upwards of ninety persons had joined the Society, in the space of ten

months.—Stahley-hall, which has hitherto been stiled Stabley-hall, either through mistake of Mr. Wesley or his printer, appears to be an old Hall, connected with Staley-bridge, at which a pious family resided.—Davy-hulme, though not introduced by name at a much earlier period, is unquestionably one of the oldest Societies in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Mr. Wesley states, that “their neighbours *used* to disturb them”—that a magistrate granted a warrant—and that “from *that time* they” had enjoyed peace; all implying a considerable lapse of time.

The manner in which Manchester is noticed, and his conduct on the occasion, betoken some powerful feelings stirring within him, arising from certain associations. He does not appear to have remained in the town more than three hours and a half, the performance of divine service included; and though his avowed object was to visit the different Societies, yet he declares that he “Had no thought of preaching” in Manchester. He, like his brother Charles, recollected early days; and to him it was still more peculiarly painful, as Mr. Clayton had been lodged in his “Heart of hearts”—had been consulted by him—and received him into his home and into his pulpit the last time he visited the town. The very omission of Mr. Clayton’s name, seems to indicate a blank in some of the pages of friendship; while Mr. Wesley’s allusion to the past, at Salford-cross, must have inflicted a species of summary punishment upon the man, who, at a single stroke, could snap in twain the cords that had bound them together for years. It was, in short, a publication of the change which had been experienced; and, than its proclamation at the market-cross, not any thing could have afforded greater publicity.

Among the “quiet, loving people at *Booth-bank*,” there is one whom it would be improper not to notice. The account is copied from a manuscript in the hand-writing of Mr. Pawson, furnished by Mr. G. Marsden, and is as follows.

“That the grace of God can conquer the most stubborn sinner, and change the most deeply depraved heart, we have seen many proofs in this day of his visitation. Perhaps there never was a more remarkable witness of the goodness of God than Alice Cross; a woman well known to many people. She was a farmer’s wife, who lived at a lone house by the road side, at *Booth-bank*, not many miles from Manchester. This woman had before been a rude, uncultivated creature, but was brought to hear the Methodists, when they first visited that part of the country where she lived. She

was soon deeply awakened, and turned to God with her whole heart. Seeing herself a mere sinner, and having nothing to pay, she was soon made a happy partaker of the pardoning love of God; and having had much forgiven, she loved much. Being now made joyful in the Lord, she earnestly desired that others should be made participators of the same grace, which she so largely experienced. She first began with her husband, who was a man of the same character which she herself had been, as to religion; and as he was a total stranger, so he was an enemy to the truth. However, she was not to be hindered by him, do what he would. When it was time to go to preaching, she would take her straw hat in one hand and hold the door by the other, and would say, in her plain way, with all possible seriousness, ‘John Cross, wilt thou go to heaven with me? If thou wilt not, I am determined not to go to hell with thee.’ He was soon prevailed upon to go along with her, was truly awakened, soon brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and lived many years an uniform follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“They now gladly received the servants of God into their dwelling, had a pulpit fixed in their largest room, and had a church in their house for many, many years. A Society was formed, and Alice was made the leader of the class. She regularly visited all the sick in the neighbourhood, whether they sent for her or not. She would invite all the common beggars into the house, sit down beside them, solemnly warn them of their sin and danger, earnestly exhort them to seek the salvation of God, kneel down and pray with them, then relieve them according to her ability, and send them away. When the gentlemen came a hunting into the neighbourhood, she would take her hat, run after them, and in the plainest terms, tell them what would be the consequence, if they did not forsake their sinful ways. On her husband being made constable, she having far more courage than himself, he would send her to the constables’ meetings. Methodism being held in the deepest contempt in those days, the gentlemen would frequently take very great liberties, in running out against those who professed it; but as she neither feared them, nor was at all ashamed of the truth, she soon put them all to silence.

“Alice had a sister exactly of the character of herself, before her conversion. She went to see her, and took abundance of pains to convince her of her sinful, lost, and ruined state. On finding that she could make her understand no-



thing, and that she could produce no good impression upon her heart, she then accosted the poor hardened creature in still plainer terms. She asked, 'Dost thou ever pray?' The sister said, 'Yes; what dost thou think?' 'How dost thou say thy prayers?' it was inquired. 'Dost thou say, Our Father, who art in hell? The devil is thy father, woman; for thou art doing his works, as Jesus Christ himself tells thee.'

"I had heard a good deal about Alice; and when I first went to the house, she was standing in the door-way. She was dressed exceedingly plain, but remarkably clean: and if I can form any just idea how a person would look, who had just come from the world of happy spirits, I should suppose that she very nearly resembled such an one; and more so, I seriously think, than any woman I ever yet saw in the whole course of my life. I said, 'I suppose I am come to the right place?' She replied. 'Yes, my dear, I trust you are; come in, my love, come in; and the Lord bless your coming amongst us.'

"When they happened to be disappointed of a preacher, she herself would occupy the pulpit. While hearing a sermon, I never saw her sit down. She took her stand beside the pulpit, and turned her face to the wall, so that she never saw who was there till the service was over. She was uniformly one of the most zealous, active, serious, and spiritually-minded women I was ever acquainted with; and that for a number of years, and at last died in a good old age, happy in the love of God."

Mr. Pawson first became acquainted with Alice Cross in 1765, when she was advanced both in grace and in years. The drawing with which we are presented is simple, and in some of its parts, approaching the picturesque. She appears to have been a subject from which an amplitude of character might have been struck out, and in the hands of one of our modern novelists—especially the magician of the north, would have constituted a heroine, and have afforded food for the imagination to revel in through the pages of two or three duodecimo volumes. But her character was too sacred for the sport of imagination; and truth, like the sun, is too pure and splendid, to admit of the flickerings of artificial light to add to its lustre. She fell into the hands of a man who had no imagination to indulge, who dealt in nothing but fact—and fact too, in its unadorned state; but the little that he has imparted, exhibits her to the view with all the decision and majesty of a Deborah; and though blended here and there with a degree of rusticity, yet it is the rusti-

city which is almost inseparable from the cottage and from the country, and is so happily tempered with genuine gospel simplicity, that we are involuntarily led back to patriarchal, rather than to more modern times, and seem to see Mr. Pawson—one of the angels or messengers of the churches, approaching the dwelling of Abraham, and Sarah standing at “the tent door” to bid him welcome. The renovating, and transforming influence of the Spirit of God, seems to have effected as great a change in the family,—in their passing from nature to grace, from death to life, from the world to the church, as that which is experienced by the saint, in passing from earth to heaven—when all old things are done away, and every thing becomes new.

## CHAPTER V.

*Three Letters from the Rev. William Grimshaw to Mr. Wesley, comprising notices of the prosperity of the Work of God, Wm. Darney's Societies, Mr. Grimshaw's itinerancy, John Bennet, Mr. Perronet, Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Hutchinson, Parochial duties, the further extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, Mr. Carmichael, a pious clergyman, and an enumeration of the places visited in Lancashire and Cheshire.—Mr. Grimshaw's house opened for the reception of Methodist Preachers—Societies continuing to add to their numbers—a want of labourers in the vineyard—Brotherly love—an address to christian Societies—Rochdale and its neighbourhood—Thomas Mitchel, &c.*

FROM the time that Mr. Wesley visited Haworth, in the month of May, which is the first notice of the kind, Mr. Grimshaw appears to have entered into a closer alliance with the Methodist body than before, and to have extended his field of labour. Of both his spirit and his exertions, together with the increasing state of the Societies, the following Letters to Mr. Wesley, will afford tolerable specimens.

## LETTER I.

*Haworth, May, 30, 1747.*

Rev. and Dear Brother,

I hope this will find you in good health, and at hard but happy-making labour. O may the Lord give you sufficient strength of soul and body, as well as find employment in his vineyard, to the end. The work, I hope, prospers well in all those parts. The Societies you formed in William Darney's circuit, I hear are in a good state. I went amongst those about Todmorden, the week after you were there, and, to my great comfort, found it so. I likewise observed a general disposition in all sorts to hear the gospel. I exhorted twice that day; for I will not have it called preaching. I afterwards gave a short exhortation to a few, who happened to come too late to hear either of the former. I then took leave, and came away about seven in the evening. I lay that night at a friend's house, about six miles from Todmorden,

in the road to Halifax. Next morning, about half a mile from thence, in the parish of Heptonstall, in which you also were; and, in my way home, at a friend's house, (to whom I had signified my intention two or three days before,) I was met, praised be God, by a great multitude. The house was so full, that one-third part, if not more, I think, stood out of doors. I stood just within the door threshold, for the convenience of all. I exhorted near an hour and a half. The Lord gave me great freedom and power. These were as attentive, serious, and civil as those the day before.

At my coming home, I met with a letter from a Clergyman, about fourteen or fifteen miles from hence, and not above two or three from that place where you preached in Rossendale, before you set off to Manchester. He desired me to come and preach at his Chapel, on the morrow. I embraced the request, finding freedom in my heart, perceiving that a door is hereby opened, and that the Lord seems to make my way plain before me. I propose to set out to-day at noon, and to walk it, having an agreeable friend to bear me company. I know the Lord is with me.

William Darney desires a particular letter from you respecting his going into Scotland. He would go soon after Whitsuntide, if you think proper. I shall see him I hope to-morrow, as also Mr. Bennet, who will both be at the Chapel I am going to; and I intend that one or both of them shall preach at noon near the same place.

Last Lord's day I received a letter from one Mr. Perronet, at Mrs. Holme's, desiring to see me last Monday there; but I could not conveniently go. I suppose he is gone. However, this week, I rode to Mrs. Holme's, assuring her, with the Lord's leave, that I would next wait upon her. I hope we shall remember you with pleasure. I had Mr. Hutchinson and his sister, from Leeds, here the last Lord's day. I hear a comfortable account from the Lord's people in those parts also. I hope you meet with all things well wherever you come. You will not fail to present my tender respects to your brother: the same I desire to all the sincere servants and seekers of the blessed Jesus, your Redeemer and mine. O may we be kept faithful to him to the end: may we ever go forth in his strength, incessantly making mention, yea, loudly proclaiming his righteousness only; indefatigably labouring to glorify him in our hearts, lips, and lives, which are his, and continually endeavouring to bring innumerable sons and daughters to glory by him. This week two members of our Society, a married man and woman, are gone to rest with



this precious Lord. Blessed be his name. To him I heartily commend you and yours. Lord Jesus, sweet Jesus, be with you.

I am, dearest Sir,

Your unworthy, but affectionate younger brother,

WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.

## LETTER II.

*Exwood, Aug. 20, 1747.*

Rev. and very Dear Brother,

Wherever these lines find you, may they find you full of the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, fighting, in the strength of our Lord, the good fight of faith, pulling down the strong holds of Satan, and industriously labouring to deliver multitudes of poor sin-slaved souls out of the kingdom of darkness, into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God! Such success let us daily and heartily beseech our dear Redeemer to bless all his faithful ministers with, wherever he sends them. You will desire to know how I do, O, dear Sir, hearty and happy in the Lord; and how my ministry, or, rather, the present state of my parish. Blessed be God, flourishing still more and more; our Societies are, in general, very lively in the Lord; and several others, though not as yet joined in society, are nevertheless come to a sense of the pardoning love of God; others are under deep concern, or eagerly hungering and thirsting after our Redeemer. Two under my own roof are just now under true conviction; one a girl about eighteen years old, and the other, a boy about fourteen; and, I hope, my own little girl, between ten and eleven years old. It is near six months since she first began to shew a serious concern for her sinful state.

The method which I, the least and most unworthy of my Lord's ministers, take in my parish, is this; I preach the gospel, glad tidings of salvation, to penitent sinners, through faith in Christ's blood only, twice every Lord's day the year round, (save when I expound the Church Catechism, and thirty-nine Articles, or read the Homilies, which, in substance, I think my duty to do in some part of the year annually on the Lord's day mornings). I have found this practice, I bless God, of inexpressible benefit to my congregation, which consists, especially in the summer season, of perhaps ten or twelve hundred; or, as some think, many more souls. We have also prayers, and a chapter expounded every Lord's-day evening. I visit my parish in twelve several places monthly, convening six, eight, or ten families, in each place, allowing

any people of the neighbouring parishes that please to attend that exhortation. This I call my monthly visitation. I am now entering into the fifth year of it, and wonderfully, dear Sir, has the Lord blessed it. The only thing more, are our funeral expositions or exhortations, and visiting our societies in one or other of the three last days of every month. This I purposed, through the grace of God, to make my constant business in my parish, so long as I live.

But, O dear Sir, I know not what to say; I know not what to do. Sometimes I have made more excursions into neighbouring parishes, to exhort, but always with a Nicodemical fear, and to the great offence of the clergy, which, till lately, almost made me resolve to sally out no more, but content myself in my own bounds: till lately, I say; for on Wednesday was six weeks, from about five o'clock in the afternoon, to about twelve at night, and again for some hours together, I may say, the day following, my mind was deeply affected with strong impressions to preach the gospel abroad: the event I left to the Lord, fearing to be disobedient to what, I trust, was the heavenly call. The first thing suggested to me, was, to visit William Darney's Societies; I accordingly met one of them about a month ago. Last week I struck out into Lancashire and Cheshire, Mr. Bennet bearing me company. We visited the societies in Rochdale, Manchester, and Holme, in Lancashire, and Booth-bank, in Cheshire. At the same time we made a visit to Mr. Carmichael, a clergyman at Tarvin, near Chester. He says, he received remission of sins last September; and, I believe, preaches the same truth to his people.

From thence we came back by Booth-bank to Manchester, visited the Society a second time, and there we parted. I called and spent a part of two days with William Darney's Societies, particularly those in Todmorden, Shore, Mellerbarn, Rossendale, Bakup, Crostone, Stoneshawfate, Crimsworth-dean; every where the Lord was manifestly with us: great blessings were scattered, and much zeal and love, with great humility and simplicity, appeared in most people every where. The whole visit found me employment for near five days. O it was a blessed journey to my soul! I now, in some measure, begin to see the import of our Lord's design, by that deep impression upon my mind above-mentioned. I am determined, therefore, to add, by the divine assistance, to the care of my own parish, that of so frequent a visitation of Mr. Bennet's, William Darney's, the Leeds and Birstal Societies, as my own convenience will permit, and their cir-

cumstances may respectively seem to require, all along eyeing the Lord's will and purposes for me. If I find the Lord's pleasure be, that I must still launch out further, I will obey; for he daily convinces me more and more what he has graciously done, and will do, for my soul. O! I can never do enough in gratitude and in love to him, for the least mite, if I may reverently so speak, of what his blessings are to me. O, dear Sir, that I may prove faithful and indefatigable in his vineyard! that I may persevere to the last gasp steadfast, immoveable, and always abounding in his work! Do you pray—the same shall be mine for you, your dear brother, and all our fellow-labourers.

What I purpose concerning surveying the abovesaid Societies, as I have great cause to believe it is the Lord's will, from the freedom I feel thereto in my heart, so I question not but it will be agreeable to your conception of it. I desire to do nothing but in perfect harmony and concert with you, and therefore beg you will be entirely free, open, and communicative, to me. I bless God, I can discover no other at present, but every way a perfect agreement between your sentiments, principles, &c. of religion, and my own; and therefore desire you will, (as I do to you) from time to time, lay before me such rules, places, proposals, &c. as you conceive mostly conducive to the welfare of the church, the private benefit of her members, and, in the whole, to the glory of the Lord. My pulpit, I hope, shall be always at your's, and your brother's service; and my house, so long as I have one, your welcome home. The same I'll make it to all our fellow-labourers, through the grace of God.

Please to wink at the faults you meet with in this long, incoherent ramble; and assure yourself,

I am, your affectionate, but very unworthy Brother,  
in the Lord,

WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.

### LETTER III.

*Ewood, Nov. 27, 1747.*

Rev. and very dear Brother,

Your's, bearing date the 20th of this month, I yesterday received. I answer again, and by the length of my letter it will appear, I answer not in haste; though I must assure you, I have as little leisure for writing, as any thing I do. The want of preachers here at present is very great. That the harvest, in these parts, is really large, and the labourers

but very few, is very manifest: why it is so perhaps the Lord of it only knows. Indeed, you, in some sort, assign a reason for it. But, dear Sir, are there such plenty of helpers in Cornwall? Send us one or two of them, without further entreaty.

You desire a particular account of the progress of the Lord's work here. Indeed, I have the pleasure of assuring you, that I think it never went better, from its first appearance amongst us, than it has done within these two months. I may say, at Leeds, Birstal, Keighley, Todmorden, Rossendale, Heptonstall, Pendleforest, and in my own parish, the Societies are very hearty; souls are daily added to the church; and, I may say, multitudes, on all sides, (many of whom have been enemies to us and our Master's cause,) are convinced of the truth, run eagerly to hear the gospel, and (as I told you in my last) are continually crying out for more preachers. New and numerous classes have been lately joined. Were not matters thus with us, you may easily suppose I should not be so urgent with you for assistance. I think my public exhortations (alias what I call my monthly visitations) in my parish, were never so visibly blessed, I praise God, for these four years past, as they have been within these two last months. Such a mighty presence of God has been in those visitations, and also in many of our weekly class-meetings, as I have rarely seen before. This evening I am venturing, by the divine assistance, upon a public exhortation in a wild, unchristian place, called Midgley, four miles west from Halifax, where, of late, I have a great part of my residence; and I hope my attempt will have the Lord on my side.

I hope brother Bennet fails not to inform you, how well the work of grace flourishes in Derbyshire, Cheshire, and in the south of Lancashire, particularly about Bolton, Chowbent, &c. Mr. Lunelle (whose wife has lately experienced the pardoning love of God) wrote me a delightful account of the state of the church at Leeds. Thus much of my incoherent relation of our Lord's work in these parts.

Brother Bennet, Nelson, and I, not only, I hope, love as brethren, but are cordially united in carrying on the Lord's work. I hope we believe, and profess, and preach, one thing—JESUS and HIM crucified. If you know them, you know me. About three weeks since brothers Nelson and Colbeck were all night with me. Before then I accidentally met with brother Bennet at Bank, near Heptonstall, where I went to meet all the Heptonstall parish classes. Last



week I met brother Colbeck, and all the Keighley parish classes: and about six weeks ago I visited those of Leeds and Birstal: about a month since, those of Todmorden, Shore, and some of Rossendale.

Dear Sir, I beg you will present my hearty respects to all your societies, classes, &c. in London, or elsewhere, in the following manner:

1. To believers. Dear souls, I frequently have you in my thoughts, and wonder how your hearts are disposed towards our Saviour. Do you still continue fervent in spirit, serving the Lord? Is he still the most precious, the more you experience of his grace? Or, like the ungrateful Israelites, which, God forbid, do you begin to loathe the heavenly manna? Sure, the more you feel by faith the virtue of the blood and righteousness of our dear Saviour, the more you are filled with the love of God, and the sweet consolations of the Holy Ghost. For, as our Lord truly affirms, the kingdom of heaven is within you; so that kingdom is asserted by St. Paul, to be righteousness, (and then) peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The more therefore you feel of this, the more will you rejoice, and the more will you hunger and thirst thereafter. Which if you do, "Blessed are you, says our Lord, for you shall be filled." Loath would I think, but that this is the disposition of your hearts, who have received the pardoning love of God our Saviour. O may you be affected with an insatiable appetite for a Saviour's graces, daily more and more. How will the for-ever-blessed THREE rejoice to see it, and rejoice to satisfy it. Therefore, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find." The more you enjoy of God's grace, the more will he endue you therewith. He gives plentifully and upbraideth no man. "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance." God's treasury never fails, how much soever goes out of it. Nor doth he ever tire with giving; if you never tire with asking, and carefully improve what he gives. O may you receive abundantly at this all-bounteous hand, and may you never fail, nor faint, whilst breath lasts, to improve it to the donor's glory, and your own everlasting benefit!

2. To seekers: and supposing some of you are but yet seeking the Lord, and have never felt his pardoning love, nor the joy which follows: supposing you are mourning under the load of sin, or panting for a deliverance through a Saviour: courage, dear souls, and despair not. He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The bruised reed he will not break; the smoking flax he will not quench. No,

no, he has wounded you, on purpose to bind you up. To you he has made a promise. Blessed are you that mourn, for ye shall be comforted. This holy David well knew. Psalm cxvi. "Come unto me," cries our Lord, "all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What though you cannot as yet with children, cry, *Abba Father*; though with them you as yet perceive not yourselves, set down to the full meal of your heavenly Father's table; though you may think you are looked upon at present but as dogs, as indeed what are any of us better by nature, than dogs living upon our vomits? Yet, with the Syro-Phœnecian woman, think well to be called dog, (sincere contrition for sins will readily bear the name) and then have you hereby a title to the crumbs which fall from your master's table. Claim but the dog's portion; beg to live under the table, and then shall you shortly partake of the children's loaf. A broken and contrite heart he will not despise, Psalm li. 17. You shall quickly hear your Master say, as he did to the woman; O my precious mourning souls! "Great is your faith! Be it unto you (mark the next words) even as thou wilt!"

To him I heartily commend you all, being one, who have, I trust, received grace, and am determined, through my Saviour's never-failing assistance, to live and die in his service; as, I hope, you all are, or else woe be to you.

WILLIAM GRIMSHAW.

No greater evidence is necessary to confirm the truth of the statement, which professes to constitute the Vicar of Haworth an *Assistant* to Mr. Wesley, than his own language, where he observes, "I desire to do nothing but in perfect harmony and concert with you;" and then proceeds to state his readiness to submit to such "proposals"—to walk by "such rules"—and to be directed to such "places," as Mr. Wesley might "conceive most conducive to the welfare of the church, &c."

Another important point in Methodism, which has been slightly adverted to, but which deserves more ample attention, is the establishment of "Weekly class-meetings," which Mr. Grimshaw, in another instance, styles "Parish-Classes." They were not barely *Societies* that were established, but those Societies were divided into *Classes*, and the members of these Classes were again formed into *Bands*, while the Bands themselves were distinguished by the epithets of *Public* and *Select*; thus forming a beautiful assemblage of hallowed circles—one enclosed within another—and each in-

creasing in sanctity of character in proportion to its narrowing approach to the centre. The plan adopted for the admission of members has always been distinguished for its simplicity, as well as creditably supported by authority. When a candidate is proposed for christian communion, he is received *on trial*, in which probationary state he remains for the space of two or three months. If approved of at the termination of this period, he is then admitted as a member, and receives a printed ticket, with his name written upon it, together with the name or initials of the Preacher by whom it is presented. This "Society Ticket" bears an analogy, and is given for a similar purpose to that of the "Commendatory letters" of the primitive church.\* These were "called by Tertullian, *the communication of peace, the title of brotherhood, and the common mark of hospitality*: by virtue whereof, they were admitted to communicate in all the churches through which they passed," either when on a journey, or during a short residence from home.†

When Mr. Grimshaw speaks of "the Societies in Rochdale," he unquestionably refers to the Societies in the neighbourhood; and one of the places which he visited, but which is not named by him, was Knowsley. It appears from a M.S. account lying before the writer, and furnished by Mr. Geo. Haworth of Trough, still living (1827), that it was the scene of early labour. Referring to the Sketch he had drawn up, he remarks, "This small and imperfect account does not pretend to interfere with the affairs of Rochdale and Bacup, as it respects early Methodism, but only with a short tract of country between Bacup and Wardle, comprising a space of about six miles; and what I write, is not only what I have heard from my ancestors, but is the result of personal knowledge. Shawford may be considered as in the centre. Mr. Grimshaw visited a house called Knowsley, near Shawford, which was occupied by a person of the name of Robert Heyworth. This was about the year 1747. Among others who preached at the place were Wm. Darney, Paul Greenwood, Jonathan Maskew, and Thomas Mitchell—all from Yorkshire. The place is considered to be about the centre of England, and the house itself stood high on one of the Lancashire mountains. Bad as the roads were, and rough as the weather might be in winter, these servants of the Lord were

\* 2 Cor. 3. 1.

† Lord King's History of the Creed, with critical Notes: Art. Com. of Saints, p. 345, third edit.

sure to be at their work early on a Sunday morning, preaching with a zeal for which the first race of Methodist Preachers were so remarkable. To Robert Heyworth and his son-in-law, James Haworth, the word of God proved effectual to the conversion of their souls. The former removed some years afterwards to the neighbourhood of Todmorden, and the latter to the neighbourhood of Bacup. James died in peace in 1768; and his funeral sermon was preached by Mr. George Hudson. There was another good man, with whom I was personally acquainted, of the name of James Cawcroft, whose brother was a Local Preacher, who received saving benefit under the ministry of the word. Some years after the Methodists had obtained footing in Shawford, the work declined, and the place was nearly deserted."

Thomas Mitchell, who entered the vineyard as an additional labourer about this period, was born in the parish of Bingley, in Yorkshire, December 3, 1726. His parents were religiously disposed, and both died in the faith. The fear of God was implanted in his heart from childhood, and he laboured under deep convictions when only five years of age. But as he advanced in life, his mind became more obtuse in reference to divine things; till at length, in the time of the Rebellion, he enlisted into the Yorkshire Blues, among whom he met with a good man, who, by the advice he administered, renewed the awakenings of spirit which had been experienced in earlier days. The following extracts from his life, will in some measure connect with the range of country, which this work professes to embrace.

"In the year 1746," he observes, "the rebellion being over, we were discharged. I then sought for a people that feared God, and joined the Society. I heard John Nelson several times, and began to have some hope of finding mercy: some time after I went to hear Mr. Grimshaw, and was convinced that we were to be saved by faith; yea, that the very worst of sinners might be saved, by faith in Jesus Christ. Soon after, I heard Mr. Charles Wesley preach from these words, *I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified*. He shewed clearly, that Christ is able and willing to save the greatest sinners. I was much refreshed under the sermon.—But when he told us, we might know our sins forgiven in this life; yea, this very moment, it seemed to me new doctrine, and I could not believe it at all. But I continued in prayer; and in a few days, I was convinced of it to my great joy. The love of Christ broke into my soul, and drove away all



guilt and fear: and at the same time he filled my heart with love both to God and man. I saw that God was my salvation, and now could trust him, and praise him with joyful lips.

“Soon after this, Mr. John Wesley came to Bradforth, and preached on, *This one thing I do*. He joined several of us together in a Class, which met about a mile from the town. But all of them fell back and left me alone; yet afterward some of them returned. Before this, I thought my hill was so strong, that I could never be moved. But seeing so many fall into sin, I began to see danger in my way. I began to feel an evil heart of unbelief, and was fully convinced, that there must be a farther change in my heart, before I could be established in grace. Afterward I removed to Keighley, and had many opportunities of hearing, and profiting by Mr. Grimshaw. But feeling my corruptions, with strong temptations, I fell into great doubtings. I was almost in despair, full of unbelief. I could scarce pray at all. I was in this state near half a year, finding no comfort in any thing. But one evening, one of our friends prayed in the Society, and my soul was set at liberty. All my doubts fled away, and faith and love once more sprung up in my heart. I afterward saw, that God had a farther end in these trials and deliverances.

“Not long after this, I felt a great desire to tell others what God had done for my soul. I wanted my fellow creatures to turn to the Lord, but saw myself utterly unfit to speak for him. I saw the neighbourhood, in which I lived, abounding with all manner of wickedness. And no man caring for their souls, or warning them to flee from the wrath to come, I began to reprove sin wherever I was, though many hated me for so doing. I did not regard that; for God gave me an invincible courage. But still I did not see clearly, whether I was called to speak in public, or no. After many reasonings in my mind, I ventured to give notice of a meeting. When the time came my soul was bowed down within me; my bones shook, and one knee smote against the other. I had many to hear me: some of them heard me with pain, and advised me to speak no more in public. But one young woman was convinced of her lost condition, and never rested till she found redemption.”

After an account of the persecutions he sustained, his journeying from place to place in quest of employment, and stating that he “Wrought diligently at his business through the day, and in the evenings called sinners to repentance,”

he proceeds to remark, "From Leeds I went to Birstall. It happened to be their preaching night. John Nelson was sick in bed, so the people desired me to preach or give them a word of exhortation. Accordingly I preached in the best manner I could, and the people seemed well satisfied. The next day I went to High Town, and preached to a large congregation in the evening. I had much liberty in speaking, and found a great blessing to my own soul; and I have reason to believe the people were well satisfied.

"From Birstal I went to Heptonstall. Here I met with a lively people who received me very kindly. I gave several exhortations among them, and the word went with power to many hearts. I continued some time in these parts, and went to several places in Lancashire. Here also I found many were awakened, and several found peace with God, while I was among them. I endeavoured to form a regular Circuit in these parts, and in a little time gained my point.

"I continued in these parts some time, and have reason to hope that I was useful among them. In one place I met with a mob of women, who put me into a pond of water, which took me nearly over my head. But by the blessing of God, I got out safe, and walked about three miles in my wet cloaths, but I caught no cold. I continued some time in these parts, encouraged by the example and advice of good Mr. Grimshaw.

"One time, Paul Greenwood and I called at his house together, and he gave us a very warm exhortation, which I shall not soon forget. He said, "If you are sent of God to preach the gospel, all hell will be up in arms against you. Prepare for the battle, and stand fast in the good ways of God. Indeed you must not expect to gain much of this world's goods by preaching the gospel. What you get must come through the devil's teeth; and he will hold it as fast as he can. I count every covetous man, to be one of the devil's teeth. And he will let nothing go, for God and his cause, but what is forced from him."\*

In the year 1751, T. Mitchell gave himself entirely up to the work of the christian ministry, and was appointed to labour in Lincolnshire.

\* Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 314.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Stockport and its neighbourhood—John Oliver—Miss Simpson—Robert Anderton—John Appleton—Mrs. Smallwood—Facit—Halifax—Haworth and its vicinity—Messrs. Wesley and Grimshan—Violent opposition at Colne, and in various adjacent places—The Rev. George White preaches and publishes a Sermon against the Methodists, encourages the mob, his character, and works—Mr. Wesley's letter on the conduct and proceedings of the rioters—He pursues his journey to Manchester, and preaches in the neighbouring towns—Bolton—Dr. Taylor—A singular account of a young woman—J. Bennet—Hayfield—Bongs—Effects of a great rain—Jonathan Catlow—Todmorden.*

THOUGH the Society at Woodley, and other places around Stockport and Manchester, must have sustained a serious loss in the removal of Robert Swindels, who was now an *Assistant Preacher*,\* the Divine Being was mercifully summoning others forth to supply his lack of service. Among those who were under divine influence, and who afterwards occupied a prominent station in the Wesleyan body, was John Oliver. He was born in Stockport, in 1732; and till the fifteenth or sixteenth year of his age, continued the subject of occasional deep convictions and vicious practices. Conceiving an inveterate prejudice against the Methodists, and having some personal knowledge of one of them, he laboured with boyish ardour to convince him, that Methodism, as a religious system, was radically bad, and that its professors were enemies to the Established Church. His acquaintance, however, was not long in convincing *him* of his own destitution of personal piety; and the consequence was, that he avoided every approach to him afterwards. His conscience, in the mean time, being but ill at rest, he was led to an abandonment of his profane sports and associates, and an attendance on the service of the Establishment; enjoining on himself a repetition of its collects and of its prayers, and the duty of

\* Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 58.

religious fasting. In this way he proceeded for some time; and as his personal history is interwoven with the history of the infant Society in Stockport, it will be proper to enter into some detail.

He observes, after ceasing to listen to the arguments and expostulations of his companions in vice, "I read, prayed, fasted; went to Church, and seemed more and more resolved, till, after a few months, several young men of my acquaintance came from Manchester on the Lord's day, to an inn just opposite to our house, and sent over for *me*. My father pressing me to go, I went; only resolving not to stay long. But I soon forgot this, and all my good resolutions. When I came home at night, I was in agony. I did not dare to pray. My conscience stared me in the face; and the terror I felt was inconceivable.

"It was soon spread abroad, that I was melancholy. A neighbour, who was a hearer of the Methodists sent me word there was to be preaching that night. My father declared, 'If I went he would knock my brains out, though he should be hanged for it.' However, I stole away. The preacher was John Appleton, who invited *all that were weary and heavy laden, to come to Jesus*. It was balm to my soul. I drank it in with all my heart, and began to seek God as I had not done before. Till now, I thought of saving *myself*. My cry now was, 'Lord, save or I perish.' Yet I knew not how to go on, till one sent me word, there was a person at her house who would be glad to see me. It was Miss Simpson. She told me the manner of her conversion to God. She sung an hymn, and went to prayer. I was all in a flame to know these things for myself. As soon as I got home, I went to prayer, and pleaded the merits of Christ. Suddenly, I thought I heard a clear voice, saying, 'Son! thy sins which are many, are forgiven.' I cried out, 'Lord, if this be from thy Spirit, let the words be applied with power.' Instantly I heard a second time, 'Son, thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee.' In an instant all my load was gone, and I felt such a change as cannot be expressed. I loved God: I loved all mankind. I could not tell whether I was in the body or out of it. Prayer was turned into wonder, love, and praise.

"In this happy state I remained for several months, feeling nothing in my heart but love. Yet I wanted some agreeable companions; and I *thought over* all the people I knew. I could not recollect any of our Church that were such as I wanted: no, nor among the Dissenters or Quakers. The



last people I thought of were the Methodists; I found my soul united to them: I took an opportunity of asking one of them, Robert Anderton, 'What are the terms of admission among them?' He told me, 'These:' putting the rules of the Society into my hands, and desiring me to read and consider them. Having done this, I told him, There was one rule which I was afraid I could not keep: 'Meeting every week:' but I would meet as often as I could. So I joined the Society in the year 1748.

"I was now tried in a manner I had not been before. My father was a man of a violent temper: and as much as he loved me, his anger quickly overcame his natural affection. He sent to all the Methodists, threatening what he would do, if any of them dared to receive me into their houses. Several gentlemen of the town, advised him to proceed to more severe methods. He did so, frequently breaking sticks, and sometimes chairs, upon me. When all this did not move me, he tried another way, charging me with disobedience, and telling me I had broke his heart, and would bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

"Several clergymen then called upon me, and strove to shew me the Methodists were in the wrong. One of them was Mr. Dale, lately my master, who called me his child, prayed for me, wept over me, and conjured me, if I loved my own soul, not to go near those people any more. My father promised before Mr. Dale, I should go to Church prayers every day, and have every indulgence I could wish, provided I would come no 'more near those d—ned villains.' I told him, I would do every thing in my power, as a child to a parent, to oblige him: but this was a thing that affected my conscience, which therefore, I could not give up.

"Our Society was now much united together, and did indeed love as brethren. Some of them had just began to meet in band, and invited me to meet with them. Here, one of them speaking of the wickedness of his heart, I was greatly surprised; telling them, I felt no such things, my heart being kept in peace and love all the day long. But it was not a week before I felt the swelling of pride, and the storms of anger and self-will: so when I met again, I could speak the same language with them. We sympathized with each other, prayed for each other, and believed God was both able and willing to purify our hearts from all sin.\*"

It is in what is thus related by John Oliver, that we have

\* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 417.421.

the first *published* account of a Methodist Society in Stockport. He connects with his leaving School, the introduction of Methodism, and says, "The Methodists, so called, then coming to Stockport, I was greatly prejudiced against them:" and in 1748, which was the period of his union with the body, there was *preaching*, a *Society*, and a *Band*. By uniting the researches of Mr. Abel Wilson to those of Mr. Rigg, the former of which have been furnished in M. S. and the latter published in the Wesleyan Magazine,\* the reader will have something like solid ground upon which to rest his faith. It is conjectured that John Bennet was the first that preached the gospel in Stockport, as a Methodist preacher. Mrs. Smallwood, or Small, a widow, was the first person who received these messengers of mercy into her house. She occupied part of a house which, at that time, was called Petty Carr Hall; and it was there that a small class was formed, which was placed under the care of Robert Anderton; the class supposed to be referred to by John Oliver. Of Robert Anderton, but little can be learned, especially at this period of the history. Till about 1752, when some particular circumstances gave a greater prominence to his character, he seems only to have been known by name and in office. In addition to the Class-meeting at Mrs. Smallwood's, the Society had a Prayer-meeting, at nine o'clock in the morning, and at five in the evening; and on the Sabbath day, preaching, occasionally, at one in the afternoon. The intermediate hours, on the Lord's day, were devoted to an attendance on the service of the Established Church.—John Appleton, whom John Oliver was invited to hear, is classed by Mr. Myles among the Local Preachers;† and as he is neither to be found in the Chronological List of Travelling Preachers, in the Minutes of Conference, nor in Mr. Atmore's Memorial, it is reasonable to suppose that he only acted in that capacity. The familiarity, indeed, with which he is introduced in the Memoir, in which his name stands—as "*John Appleton*," when contrasted with the more respectful term—"Mr. *Jaco*," the latter of whom is known to have been a Travelling Preacher, would lead to such conclusion: and if so, the sorrow of the people on the removal of Robert Swindels, must have been considerably alleviated by a permanent and seasonable supply.

When Methodism obtained an introduction to any particular place, however diminutive or obscure, it was not long,

\* For Jan. 1827, p. 21.

† Chron. Hist. p. 58.

according to the diffusive qualities of which it is composed, before it was extended to others—and extended to them, either because of their contiguity to the original spot of visitation, or because of family relationship among its professors. Thus it passed from Woodley to Stockport; and some consanguineous claims might be established between “Robert Anderton,” of Stockport, and “Mr. Anderton, of Northwich.”

Shawford was on the list of newly visited places, in the course of the preceding year, and Facit, now in the Haslingden Circuit, appears as a Methodist station in the course of this: and it was introduced here before it had either reached Haslingden or Bury,—and what is as remarkable as it is creditable, it was never known to have received, in this place, the smallest riotous opposition. Paul Greenwood was the first who opened the Wesleyan Commission in the place,—and he opened it by announcing as his text, “This day is salvation come to this house.” He was invited and entertained by a person of the name of Edward Hill. On the death of Edward, the Preachers were received by his son James, who, together with his wife, inherited the excellent properties of the father, and were both interred on the same day. After their decease, the congregation was scattered for a season, but again collected, and the Preachers entertained by Edward and Alice Leach, the son-in-law and daughter of James Hill, whose children, in their turn, continue to tread in the steps of their forefathers to the present day; so that for the space of 79 years, and by four successive generations, the Methodist Preachers have been received into the same house.

Travelling N. N. E. we shall find the state of things assuming a threatening aspect at Colne. Mr. Wesley’s periodical visits were generally anticipated a considerable time before-hand by the people; and the better to prepare the mob-forces for his reception, the Rev. George White preached a sermon against the Methodists, which was afterwards published\* with an “Epistle Dedicatory, to the Most Reverend,

\* It was with great difficulty that a copy could be obtained; and for this the writer is indebted to the industry of the Rev. Thomas Eastwood. The copy has the autograph of “John Smith,” bearing date of the year of its publication, and at the close, written by the same beautiful hand, “Zeal, if misguided, is pernicious.”—This specimen of pulpit eloquence is entitled, by its Author, “A SERMON against the METHODISTS, Preached at COLNE and MARSDEN, in the county of Lancaster, to a very numerous audience; at Colne, July 24, and at Marsden, Aug. 7. 1748. By GEORGE WHITE, M. A. Minister of Colne and Marsden, and Author of Mercurius Latinus. Published at the Request of the Audience. PRESTON: Printed for the Author, by James Stanley and John Moon: and sold by W. Owen, near Temple-Bar. London, and the Booksellers of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, and the Bishoprick of Durham.” 8vo. p. 24. The Author has appended to the Sermon a list of his other publications, which it may be a matter of curiosity to preserve.



his Grace, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury," dated from Colne, November 7th, 1748. To enter into a lengthened refutation of the errors and intellectual monstrosities founded on 1 Cor. 14. 33, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints," would be a folly at this distance of time. A brief notice of the personal History of this Protestant theologian, will prepare the reader for a ready reception of every thing stated by Mr. Wesley.

Dr. Whitaker observes, that "George White, A. M. was educated at Doway, for orders in the Church of Rome, but, upon his recantation, was noticed by Archbishop Potter, who recommended him to the Vicar of Whalley. He was the translator of Thurlow's Letters into Latin, and the editor of a newspaper called the *Mercurius Latinus*: a man neither devoid of parts nor literature, but childishly ignorant of common life, and shamefully inattentive to his duty, which he frequently abandoned for weeks together to such accidental assistance as the parish could procure. On one occasion, he is said to have read the funeral service more than twenty times in a single night, over the dead bodies which have been interred in his absence. With these glaring imperfections in his own character, he sought to distinguish himself by a riotous opposition to the Methodists, then almost an infant sect, who took advantage, as might be expected, of his absence and misconduct, under the direction of Mr. Grimshaw, an earnest sincere man, of whom I have so good an opinion as to believe that, had he lived till now to see the consequence of those eccentricities in which he allowed himself, he would have altered his conduct, and contented himself with a better-regulated zeal.\*"

Without stopping to obviate what appeared objectionable to the worthy Dr., in the "advantage" of which the Methodists availed themselves, or the "eccentricities" of Mr. Grimshaw, a further developement of the conduct of Mr. White, will shew the *advantages* to which they were entitled, by his own voluntary surrender of character to all the obliquy that could be heaped upon it. Dr. Potter, who

"The following Books written by the Rev. George White, A. M.

"The *Englishman's* Rational Proceedings in the Choice of Religion. A Sermon preached at *St. Giles's, Durham*, 1741, against Popery and Presbyterianism. *Pemberton*.

"The Miraculous Sheep's Eye, at *St. Victor's, in Paris*. A Burlesque Poem, against the Veneration of reliques, 1743. *Marshall*.

"The High-Mass. A Burlesque Poem, 1747. *Hart, Poppin's-alley, Fleet-street*. Price 6d.

"*Mercurius Latinus*: In 31 Numbers. *Faden, Salisbury-court, Fleet-street*.

"Theological Remarks on the Reverend Dr. Middleton's late *Introductory Discourse and Postscript*: With some Hints relating to his other Works. *Owen*."

\* History of Whalley, p. 388.



recommended Mr. White, had a very different subject in hand, when he ordained Mr. Wesley a Deacon in 1725, and a Priest in 1728. The career of the two men was widely different; and though they both *itinerated*, they had distinct objects in view. Mr. White *itinerated* for pleasure; and after one of his excursions, he made his appearance with a Madame Hellen Maria Piarza, an Italian governante, whom he married at Marsden, March 23rd, 1744--5.\* He had not been long from the hymeneal altar before a temporary separation took place, occasioned by his incarceration for debt; and no sooner was he released from prison, than every previously indulged and vitiated habit revived. At the time he preached his celebrated sermon, his animosity towards Methodism seems to have attained its acme; and the people who could "*request*" its publication, must have acquired a state of considerable fermentation. As the time approached for Mr. Wesley's appearance, the more formidable were the preparations for his repulsion. To such a state of degradation had the minister of Colne lowered himself, that he actually issued forth a "Proclamation for inlisting men into the mob raised against the Methodists, which ran in words to the following effect:

*"Notice is hereby given, that if any men be mindful to inlist into his Majesty's service, under the command of the Rev. Mr. Geo. White, Commander in Chief, and John Banister, Lieut. General of his Majesty's forces, for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the Manufactory in and about Colne, both which are now in danger, &c. &c., let them now repair to the drum-head at the Cross, where each man shall have a pint of ale for advance, and other proper encouragement."*†

The intoxicating inducement at the close of the "Proclamation," confirms the words of Mr. Wesley, where he observes, "It was" Mr. White's "manner first to hire, and then head the mob, when they and he were tolerably drunk.‡" This Reverend Divine carried precisely the same materials into the Church of England of which he was composed when in the Church of Rome; and with the spirit which he breathed, and the "carnal" weapons which he employed, he would have made no inconsiderable figure under the

\* Whitaker's Hist. of Whalley.

† Grimshaw's Answer to White's Sermon.

‡ Works, vol. 29, p. 215.

guidance of Bonner and Gardiner. Without detaining the reader any longer from a survey of the conflict that succeeded the Proclamation, he shall be presented with a circumstantial account from the pen of an eye-witness. Mr. Wesley observes,

“Sunday, Aug. 21, I preached as usual, at Leeds and Birstal. Monday 22. After preaching at Heaton, I rode to Skircoat green. Our brethren here were much divided in their judgment. Many thought I ought to preach at Halifax-cross. Others judged it to be impracticable; the very mention of it as a possible thing, having set all the town in an uproar. However, to the Cross I went. There was an immense number of people, roaring like the waves of the sea. But the far greater part of them were still, as soon as I began to speak. They seemed more and more attentive and composed; till a gentleman got some of the rabble together, and began to throw money among them, which occasioned much hurry and confusion. Finding my voice could not be heard, I made signs to the people, that I would remove to another place. I believe nine in ten followed me to a meadow, about half a mile from the town: where we spent so solemn an hour as I have seldom known, rejoicing and praising God.

“Tuesday 23rd. The congregation was larger at five in the morning, than it was in the evening when I preached here before. About one I preached at Baleden, and in the evening at Bradford, where none behaved indecently, but the curate of the parish.

“Wednesday 24th. At eight I preached at Ecclesal, and about one at Kighly. At five Mr. Grimshaw read prayers and I preached at Haworth, to more than the church could contain. We began the service in the morning at five. And even then the church was nearly filled.

“Thursday 25th. I rode with Mr. Grimshaw to Roughlee, where T. Colbeck, of Kighley, was to meet us. We were stopt again and again, and begged ‘Not to go on; for a large mob from Colne was gone before us.’ Coming a little farther, we understood they had not yet reached Roughlee. So we hastened on, that we might be there before them. All was quiet when we came. I was a little afraid for Mr. Grimshaw, but needed not. He was ready to go to prison or death for Christ’s sake.

“At half hour after twelve I began to preach. I had about half finished my discourse, when the mob came pouring down the hill like a torrent. After exchanging a few words with their Captain to prevent any contest, I went with him

as he required. When we came to Barrowford, two miles off, the whole army drew up in battle array before the house into which I was carried, with two or three of my friends. After I had been detained above an hour, their Captain went out and I followed him, and desired him to conduct me whence I came. He said, he would : but the mob soon followed after : at which he was so enraged, that he must needs turn back to fight them, and so left me alone.

“ A farther account is contained in the following letter, which I wrote the next morning.

“ *Widdop, Aug. 26, 1748.*

“ SIR,

“ Yesterday, between twelve and one o'clock, while I was speaking to some quiet people, without any noise or tumult, a drunken rabble came, with clubs and staves, in a tumultuous and riotous manner, the Captain of whom, Richard B. by name, said he was a deputy-constable, and that he was come to bring me to *you*. I went with him. But I had scarce gone ten yards, when a man of his company struck me with his fist in the face with all his might. Quickly after, another threw his stick at my head. I then made a little stand. But another of your champions, cursing and swearing in the most shocking manner, and flourishing his club over his head, cried out, ‘ Bring him away.’

“ With such a convoy I walked to Barrowford, where they informed me you was, their drummer going before, to draw all the rabble together from all quarters.

“ When your deputy had brought me into the house, he permitted Mr. Grimshaw, the Minister of Haworth, Mr. Colbeck of Kighley, and one more to be with me, promising, that none should hurt them. Soon after you and your friends came in, and required me to promise, ‘ I would come to Roughlee no more.’ I told you, I would sooner cut off my hand, than make any such promise. Neither would I promise, that none of my friends should come. After abundance of rambling discourse (for I could keep none of you long to any one point) from about one o'clock till between three and four (in which one of you frankly said, ‘ No, *we* will not be like Gamaliel ; we will proceed like the Jews,’) you seemed a little satisfied with my saying, ‘ I will not preach at Roughlee at this time.’—You then undertook to quiet the mob, to whom you went and spoke a few words, and their noise immediately ceased. I then walked out with you at the back-door.



“ I should have mentioned, that I had several times before desired you to let me go, but in vain ; and that when I attempted to go with Richard B. the mob immediately followed, with oaths, curses, and stones ; that one of them beat me down to the ground ; and when I rose again, the whole body came about me like lions, and forced me back into the house.

“ While you and I went out at one door, Mr. Grimshaw and Mr. Colbeck went out at the other. The mob immediately closed them in, tost them to and fro with the utmost violence, threw Mr. Grimshaw down, and loaded them both with dirt and mire of every kind : not one of your friends offering to call off your blood-hounds from the pursuit.

“ The other quiet, harmless people, who followed me at a distance, to see what the end would be, they treated still worse, not only by the connivance, but by the express order of your deputy. They made them run for their lives, amidst showers of dirt and stones, without any regard to age or sex. Some of them they trampled in the mire, and dragged by the hair, particularly Mr. Mackford, who came with me from Newcastle. Many of them they beat with their clubs without mercy. One they forced to leap down (or they would have thrown him headlong) from a rock, ten or twelve feet high, into the river. And when he crawled out wet and bruised, they swore they would throw him in again, which they were hardly persuaded not to do. All this time you sat well-pleased close to the place, not attempting in the least to hinder them.

“ And all this time you was talking of justice and law ! Alas, sir, suppose we were dissenters, (which I deny) suppose we were Jews or Turks, are we not to have the benefit of the laws of our country ? Proceed against us by the law, if you can or dare ; but not by lawless violence ; not by making a drunken, cursing, swearing, riotous mob, both judge, jury, and executioner : This is flat rebellion against God and the king, as you may possibly find to your cost.”

“ Between four and five we set out from Roughlee. But observing several parties of men upon the hills, and suspecting their design, we put on and past the lane they were making for, before they came. One of our brothers, not riding so fast, was intercepted by them. They immediately knocked him down, and how it was that he got from amongst them, he knew not.

“ Before seven we reached Widdop. The news of what had past at Barrowford, made us all friends. The person in whose house Mr. B. preached, sent and begged I would



preach there ; which I did at eight, to such a congregation as none could have expected on so short a warning. He invited us also to lodge at his house, and all jealousies vanished away.

“ Friday 26th. I preached at five to much the same congregation. At twelve we came to Heptenstall-bank. The house stands on the side of a steep mountain, and commands all the vale below. The place in which I preached was an oval spot of ground, surrounded with spreading trees, scooped out, as it were, in the side of the hill, which rose round like a theatre. The congregation was equal to that at Leeds ; but such serious and earnest attention ! It lifted up my hands, so that I preached as I scarce never did in my life.

“ About four, I preached again to nearly the same congregation, and God again caused the power of his love to be known. Thence we rode to Midgeley. Many flocked from all parts, to whom I preached till near an hour after sun-set. The calmness of the evening agreed well with the seriousness of the people ; every one of whom seemed to drink in the word of God, as a thirsty land the refreshing showers.

“ Sat. 27. I preached once more at seven to the earnest people at the Bank, and then rode to Todmorden-edge. Here several prisoners were set at liberty, as was Mr. Mackford the day before. At five I preached at Mellarburn in Rossendale. There were a few rude people ; but they kept at a distance, and it was well they did, or the awakened hearers would have been apt to handle them roughly. I observed here what I had not then seen, but at one single place in England. When I had finished my discourse, and even pronounced the blessing, not one person offered to go away : but every man, woman and child stayed just where they were, till I myself went away first.

“ Sund. 28. I was invited by Mr. U. the minister of Goodshaw, to preach in his church. I began reading prayers at seven ; but perceiving the church would scarce contain half of the congregation, after prayers I went out, and standing on the church-yard wall, in a place shaded from the sun, explained and enforced those words in the second lesson, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

“ I wonder at those, who still talk so loud of the *indecentcy* of field-preaching. The highest *indecentcy* is in St. Paul's church, when a considerable part of the congregation are asleep, or talking, or looking about, not minding a word the preacher says. On the other hand, there is the highest *decency* in a *church-yard* or *field*, when the whole congrega-

tion behave and look, as if they saw the Judge of all, and heard him speaking from heaven.

“ At one, I went to the cross, in Bolton. There was a vast number of people, but many of them utterly wild. As soon as I began speaking, they began thrusting to and fro endeavouring to throw me down from the steps on which I stood. They did so once or twice; but I went up again, and continued my discourse. They then began to throw stones; at the same time some got upon the cross, behind me, to push me down; on which I could not but observe, how God overrules even the minutest circumstances. One man was bawling just at my ear, when a stone struck him on the cheek, and he was still. A second was forcing his way down to me, till another stone hit him on the forehead; it bounded back, the blood ran down, and he came no farther. The third being got close to me, stretched out his hand, and in the instant a sharp stone came upon the joints of his fingers. He shook his hand, and was very quiet, till I concluded my discourse and went away.

We came to Shackerley, six miles further, before five in the evening. Abundance of people were gathered before six, many of whom were disciples of Dr. Taylor, laughing at Original Sin, and consequently, at the whole frame of scriptural Christianity. O what a providence is it, which has brought us here also, among these silver-tongued antichrists? Surely a few, at least, will recover out of the snare, and know Jesus Christ as their wisdom and righteousness!

“ Monday 29. I preached at Davy-hulme. I had heard a surprizing account concerning a young woman of Manchester, which I now received from her own mother. She said, “ On Friday the 4th of last March, I was sitting in the house while one read the passion-hymn. I had always before thought myself good enough, having constantly gone to church and said my prayers, nor had I ever heard any of the Methodist preachers. On a sudden I saw our Saviour on the Cross, as plain as if it had been with my bodily eyes: and I felt it was *my* sins for which he died. I cried out, and had no strength left in me. Whether my eyes were open or shut, he was still before me hanging on the cross, and I could do nothing but weep and mourn day and night. This lasted till Monday in the afternoon. Then I saw as it were heaven open, and God sitting upon his throne, in the midst of ten thousand of his saints: and I saw a large book in which all my sins were written; and he blotted them all out,

and my heart was filled with peace, and joy, and love, which I have never lost to this hour.'

"In the evening I preached at Booth-bank. Tuesday 30. I preached about one at Oldfield-brow. We rode in the afternoon to Woodley; we saw by the way many marks of the late flood: of which John Bennet, who was then upon the place, gave us the following account.

"On Saturday the 23d of July last, there fell for about three hours, in and about Heyfield in Derbyshire, a very heavy rain which caused such a flood as had not been seen by any now living in those parts.

"The rocks were loosened from the mountains: one field was covered with huge stones from side to side.

"Several water-mills were clean swept away, without leaving any remains,

"The trees were torn up by the roots, and whirled away like stubble.

"Two women of a loose character were swept away from their own door and drowned: one of them was found near the place; the other was carried seven or eight miles.

"Heyfield church-yard was all torn up, and the dead bodies swept out of their graves. When the flood abated, they were found in several places. Some were hanging on trees; others left in meadows or grounds; some partly eaten by dogs, or wanting one or more of their members.'

"Wednesday 31st. John Bennet shewed me a gentleman's house, who was a few years since utterly without God in the world. But two or three years ago, God laid his hand, both upon his body and soul. His sins dropt off. He lived holy and unblameable in all things. And not being able to *go about doing good*, he resolved to do what good he could at home. To this end he invited his neighbours to his house, every Sunday morning and evening, (not being near any church) to whom he read the prayers of the church and a sermon. Sometimes he had an hundred and fifty, or two hundred of them at once. At Bongs I received an invitation from him; so John Bennet and I rode down together: and found him rejoicing under the hand of God, and praising him for all his pain and weakness.

"In the evening I preached at Chinley."

The letter which Mr. Wesley wrote at Widdap, detailing the whole of the riotous proceedings, affords satisfactory evidence of its having been addressed to Mr. White,—a circumstance known to but few of even the early readers of his Journals. A bare perusal will be sufficient to show, that the



person addressed was considered as the *moving cause* of the disturbance, the *leader*, and an *active agent*,—all perfectly descriptive of the title Mr. White assumed, and the conduct he manifested, and equally inapplicable to any other than himself on the occasion.\*

Previously to this, Mr. Wesley, when at Skircoat-green, took up his residence with Abraham Kershaw; but now the house of Mr. Blakey Spencer, one of the first members of the Methodist Society in the neighbourhood of Halifax, was opened for the reception and the exercise of his ministry. Several of the descendants of this worthy, are to be found in the annals of Methodism, among whom is a grandson,

\* If the reader connects with the proceedings at Colne, during this visit, the personal history of the Rev. George White, "Commander in Chief," a variety of strange associations will step into existence. Among the list of publications of which he was the author, are two "Burlesque Poems;" and surely no man ever exposed himself more to retort than he did, as the hero of a poetical production from the Hudibrastic pen of another Butler. It would have afforded no small amusement to a person of less fertility of invention than the author of Hudibras, had he been disposed to adventure upon such a work, and of more than ordinary mortification to the subject, to have been exhibited in a *Serio-Comic Satirical Poem*, in the canonicals of a Roman Catholic Clergyman—linked arm in arm, in the bloom of youth, with "The Mother of Harlots," professing at the same time to be enamoured with her person—applying the tip of his tongue, for want of better employment, like another child, to the great toe of his Holiness—holding a wafer between his finger and thumb, and gazing upon its littlenesses as well as its imaginary magnitude, like a heathen beholding one of his minor household deities, and smacking his lips over it for the salvation of his soul—lighting up his countenance and rubbing his hands, "in the chambers of his imagery," over the fires of Smithfield—turning his back on the old lady he had recently courted, and, to employ a part of one of his title pages, casting a "Sheep's Eye" at another church, with which, in an ill-fated hour, he contrived, through the recommendation of Dr. Potter, to manufacture an union, as hideous and unnatural as the marriage of some of the Sylvan Gods, which appear in Milton's *Comus*, half human and half brute, with the beautiful young lady that was benighted in their sylvan haunts—next attired in the habiliments of a Minister of the Church of England—devoutly preaching up salvation and order to his flocks, in the pulpits of Colne and Marsden, then, like another Jack-the-Giant-killer, with his club in his hand, and with all the ferocity of a New Zealander, going forth to maltreat his innocent neighbours, and spread confusion and dismay throughout his parish—now administering the elements of bread and wine for the life of the soul, and then, for the destruction of both soul and body, herding with the "beasts of the people," in the nook of a common pot-house, with the glass in his hand, and the pipe in his mouth, enveloped in smoke, listening to the song of the drunkard and the voice of the swearer—now in his study, preparing for the Christian Sabbath, and composing a sermon against the Methodists, in hope of profiting by its sale, and of recommending himself to the notice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and then presented with a living within the walls of Chester Castle, to mingle with characters only less criminal than himself, and without a penny to claim as his own—now legally uniting his parishioners in the bonds of holy matrimony, and then furnishing them with an example of something like a hasty trip to the blacksmith in the north, with a female whose countrymen and countrywomen entertain such exalted notions of the English, as to have little else to present to them, but a dancing doll and a box organ—now fighting like a champion for the Church of England, and then leaving his own pulpits without a preacher for weeks together—now complaining of the Methodists being idle and endangering the manufacturing establishments in the neighbourhood, and then furnishing them with an instance of honest industry, by commencing a wholesale dealer in the burial service, toiling either by moon or candle light, amidst the stillness of the night, and moving over the graves like another spectre—thus, like a multitude of personages in a drama, alternately appearing in every diversity of costume and character. Or, to drop the notion of a Poem, the different metamorphoses experienced by the Rev. George White, and the situations in which he was so frequently found, would have afforded admirable subjects for Teniers and Hogarth, some of them keeping in countenance the drolls of the former, and others the severer engravings of the latter, whose tools were like the pen of Juvenal, when employed on his satires; and it ought to have been a source of grateful joy to the pastor of Colne, as he was contemporary with Hogarth, that he escaped the exercise of his genius. It can be no discredit to the Methodists to have it to state, that they were opposed by such men as George White, any more than it can injure the reputation of a man to have been knocked down on the King's highway, by a person destined to grace the pages of the *Newgate Calendar*: nor can it be in the smallest degree derogatory to the Established Church, to be obliged to witness the delinquency of one of her children, any more than the general good character of a family can be impeached, by the improper conduct of one of its Members.



still living, a respectable Local Preacher in the Halifax Circuit.

In addition to violent opposition at Colne, the greater part of the Societies, from twelve to twenty miles round Haworth, were deprived this year of the labour of Jonathan Catlowe, who had acted some time in the capacity of a Local Preacher, but now entered the itinerant life. He commenced his ministerial exertions at the early age of sixteen; and though it was a period when little else but verdure and blossom could be expected, he is stated to have been "blest with a considerable degree of heavenly wisdom, and fervent zeal, for the honour of God, and the salvation of souls." His call to the work will keep his youth perfectly in countenance, being distinguished with all the simplicity of childhood, both as it regards himself and the persons concerned; and to others than those who are acquainted with the early history of the son of Hannah, and can conceive of the voice of God being as distinctly heard by the child Samuel, and as much intended for him—though at first he perceived it not, as it was correctly understood by the aged Eli, the subject will present no attraction. He resided at Scartop, about two miles from Haworth. Soon after his conversion to God, he was deeply impressed with a conviction, that it was his duty to call sinners to repentance; but having no christian friend to whom he thought proper to unbosom the secrets of his soul, except his mother, to her he resorted for advice. She gave it as her opinion, that he ought to make a trial, and resolved to accompany him. The time and the opportunity arrived; and to render it as little irksome as possible, his mother, who, by the way, was the better reader of the two, and to whom age and experience had imparted superior prowess, gave out the hymns. The scene of this exhibition was a house, called Sough, near the edge of the moor, and the most remote in the parish of Keighly. His auditors were a few old women, who intimated that he had done very well; and from that day he never looked back, but went forward in the name of the Lord. This youth might have found it difficult to pass the examination of an English Bishop's domestic chaplain, for want of classical attainments, and not less so to pass an examining Committee belonging to some of our Dissenting Academies, for want of skill in some minor doctrinal points; and without at all appearing invidious by such remarks, he might have been checked in his progress through a Local Preachers' Meeting of more modern date among the Methodists: but the good old ladies, full as indifferent to non-

essentials as he himself was ignorant of their use, brought him to the test of personal experience—without which even a mitred head would have been “found wanting” at their board, and awarded him their sanction. However the writer may be disposed to applaud the simplicity of the case, and to justify the decision in connexion with the issue—the youth turning out well, it would redound but little to the honour of the man who should cite it as a precedent for the establishment of such a tribunal: and much as may be admired, this lovely picture of maternal solicitude, as a spontaneous, solitary instance—the tender mother herself, perhaps, beginning to be stricken in years, coming to bear up the hands of her still more feeble, and possibly only son—to assist him in an experiment upon which his present comfort depended, and by which his future career of usefulness was to be determined, there must ever be a conviction, that, to multiply such examples, would not only be to diminish their value by destroying their effect, but would be to advocate a cause for which there is no direct scriptural authority, and which female delicacy would in most instances prohibit.

It will appear from the specimens which have passed in review, that the opposition which almost every where obstructed the path of a Methodist Preacher, demanded no small degree of intrepidity, and no ordinary deadness to the world. These qualities were frequently called into exercise in the case of Jonathan Catlowe, as well as the more passive grace of patience. When outward violence failed, or was not altogether deemed expedient, various stratagems were resorted to, which required precaution. In one place where the person in question had been preaching, the mob contrived to dig a deep pit in the middle of the road along which he had to pass on his return home. Having filled the pit with water, it was their intention to have plunged him into it; but when he came near the spot, on perceiving their design—though without appearing to take any notice of it, he quietly turned aside, and thus escaped the danger. The agents, as he apprehended, were at no great distance; and the foremost of them, supposing that the preacher had fallen into the snare, rushed forward and plunged into it themselves, while their fellows, before they were aware of their mistake, shared, in their impetuous course, the same fate; the unoffending object of their malevolence, in the interim, making his escape. This circumstance has been improperly associated with the life of Mr. S. Bardsley.

As the Societies in different places acquired strength,

from their numbers and comparative affluence, in the same proportion attention was paid to their regular organization. It was an organization, however, which arose out of circumstances, and was not the result of previous design. In an old Society Book—perhaps the oldest now extant in the Methodist Connexion, with the exception of one at Haworth, lent to the writer by Miss Lacey, Hanging-Ditch, Todmorden, there is the following entry:—"Oct. 18th, 1748. At a meeting, then held at Major Marshall's, of the Leaders of Classes of several Religious Societies—The following persons were chosen *Stewards*; Jas. Greenwood, John Parker, John Maden, and James Dyson."

This is important, not only as the first notice, but the first formal election of *Stewards*. Mention had been made of *Leaders* prior to this; and they were regularly authorized *Leaders*, that proceeded in the work of election. Aware that it was their peculiar province to attend to the *spiritual* state of the flock, and unwilling to blend the *accountant* with the *teacher*—things *sacred* with things *temporal*, they appointed men from among themselves to superintend the *financial* affairs of the church: and this has been characteristic of Methodism from the commencement—first to attend to the soul, and then to the body—to urge men to seek first the kingdom of God, under a firm conviction that all other things should be added to them.—The election was not the work of the *People*, but of the *Leaders*—not confined to a single *Society*, but concerned the *Societies*, all being *united*, and belonging to a *body* EMINENTLY ONE—and they were not *Methodist*, but "*Religious Societies*," thus shewing, that whatever epithets others might load them with, they wished only to appear as Religious Characters.—In addition to the separate offices of Leader and Steward, we are furnished also with an example of a LEADERS' MEETING—a meeting composed of men, not belonging to classes which met in the same village or town, but which were from six to eight or ten miles asunder. A dark, cold, *October* night, as an excuse for non-attendance, might have been urged by such men with peculiar emphasis.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Mr. Grimshaw publishes an Answer to Mr. White's Sermon, and defends the Methodists—Haworth—The poverty of Halifax Society—Mr. Titus Knight—Mr. Wesley visits Manchester and the neighbourhood—Mr. Clayton's political opinions—Mr. Whitfield preaches in different parts of Lancashire, &c.—John Bennet's marriage, and its probable effects—Mr. Hopper's arrival in Manchester—The floor of the preaching-room gives way—The Society is accommodated with a place of worship, at Coldhouse-brow, by a Baptist Minister—John Maddern.*

MR. Grimshaw, in the course of this year, published a Reply to the aspersions cast upon the Methodists by the celebrated George White.\* As the latter possessed more of the bully than the Jesuit, the Vicar of Haworth treated him with less ceremony than he would have perhaps otherwise have done, and therefore occasionally indulged in personalities. The objections urged by his opponent were such as had been repeatedly employed by others, and since then, have met with various replies. Without noticing any of the doctrinal objections, the futility of which Mr. Grimshaw showed from the Bible in which Mr. White professed to believe, and the Liturgy, Homilies, and Articles of the Church to which he professed to belong, it may afford some instruction to such as have not been favoured with a perusal of Mr. Grimshaw's "Answer," to observe how the combatants met each other on subjects of a practical bearing, when they fairly entered the arena of controversy. There was too much honesty

\* The reply is entitled, "An answer to a Sermon, lately published against the Methodists by the Rev. Geo. White, A. B. Minister of Colne and Marsden, in Lancashire. By Wm Grimshaw, B. A. Minister of Haworth, in Yorkshire.—Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischief; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil, more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever. He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. The righteous also shall see and fear, and laugh at him. Psalm 52. 1—6.—Semper ego Auditor tantum? Nunquamne reponam? Juv." The motto was nearly as prophetic as it was pungent; for he was not long in "the land of the living," after its publication.



and impetuosity in the composition of Mr. Grimshaw to admit of a flourish of swords before the fatal thrust.

“You proceed,” says Mr. Grimshaw, ‘If we take a survey of the different constitutions and establishments of life, we shall find that order and regularity is necessary to their essential preservation, &c.’ This is granted in your introduction; and God forbid that this should be denied or interrupted in the economy of the church. But how does it appear that the Methodists even so much as attempt any such thing, or that their principles or practices have, in any wise, any such tendency? Their teachers intermeddle not in the administration of the sacraments:\* they neither disturb you nor any man, that I ever heard of, in your ministerial function: so far from this, that contrarywise, they are exceeding good *subs* to us, if we have but grace to see and acknowledge it. I believe, if we will but speak the truth, as we hope to answer for it at the day of judgment, we must own, that they have, through the divine assistance, who sends by whom he will send, wrought a far greater reformation in our parishes than we have done. Ah, Sir, you little know, but I pray God make you sensible and thankful for it too, before you die, how those dear servants of the Lord laboured night and day for you, without a penny from your purse, whilst you boarded at Chester Castle, and for three years together since, whilst you have been raking about in London, and up and down in the country. And now, at your return to your flock, do you find that any amongst them, that follow these good men, who deserve so well at your hands, behave disorderly at Church? Do they live dishonestly or unpeaceably among their neighbours? Or do they wrong or defraud you or any man, of their dues? Surely men of their principles, will do no such things, nor occasion any such confusion as your merciless spirit would brand them with. On the contrary, your own late riotous conduct, heading a lawless rabble of irreligious, dissolute wretches, under the name and title of *Commander in Chief*, spiriting them up to the perpetration of many grievous outrages, and inhumanly treating and abusing numbers of poor, inoffensive people; I must say, this is a far more shameful violation of order, in both Church and State; done, too, under the zeal of religion, and in defence of the Church of England! You may labour, indeed, (for what base thing is it that ill-will and malice will not prompt a man to?) to make Mr. Whitfield’s collection for the Orphan-

\* The Sacraments were not then administered by the Preachers.

House in Georgia no better than a veil for the most iniquitous intentions; and wildly, as well as uncharitably, amuse men with consequences as odious as the black examples introduced, are intended to serve. But, Sir, does not your own conduct, think you, tally much better with them? Religion, say you, was the excuse for father Girard, the Rector of a Jesuitical Seminary at Toulon's debaucheries, with Mademoiselle Cadiere; and the overflowing of Paris with Protestant blood on a Bartholomew day, and the stabbing of Henry of France by a Dominican; and so is religion an excuse (the defence of the Church of England!) with you, say I, for your mobbing and rioting, with a little less mischief, but, I fear, with no less malice. Ah, poor blind Pharisee, 'First pull the beam out of your own eye;' I wish you be not one of them of whom our Lord prophecies, 'The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.'

"'But,' say you, 'is every bold visionary (words sooner said than understood) to be a guide in matters of the highest importance?' Yes, it is highly needful, in such parishes as your's especially, where he that should be, is not such a guide."

Whenever Mr. Grimshaw found that he could make the temper of his steel tell upon the conduct of his antagonist, he seldom failed to embrace the opportunity. Perceiving another vulnerable point, where he could just strike in between the joints and the harness, he observed;

"These Methodist Preachers 'Are authors of confusion, open destroyers of the public peace, flying in the face of the very Church they may craftily pretend to follow, occasioning many bold insurrections, which threaten our spiritual government; schismatical rebels against the best of churches; authors of a farther breach into our unhappy divisions; contemners of the great command, Six days shalt thou labour, &c.; defiers of all laws, civil and ecclesiastical; professed disrespecters of learning and education, causing a visible ruin of your trade and manufactures, and in short, promoters of a shameful progress of enthusiasm and confusion, not to be paralleled in any other Christian dominion.'

*"Bombalio! Clangor! Stridor! Taratantara! Murmur!"*

"What a rattle of abominable lies is here!"

*Juvenal queries.*

*"Quid Romæ faciam? Mentiri nescio."*

"But you give the world but too good cause to believe, that you did not leave that old harlot, the mother of lies, on

this account. Whatever bad consequences the men of your spirit may maliciously presage, that Methodism may, in time, be attended with, no man that has the least respect for truth, or regard for his own reputation, and hates to be called a liar to his face, can charge it at present with any such evils, as your abandoned conscience has had the impudence to do to his Grace of Canterbury.\* Several have attempted, indeed, both from the pulpit and press, to cast various reflections and scandals upon this *new way*, as they, like Athenians, Acts 17, 19, call it; but there is none, we may see, for the purpose, like one of Rome's breeding; it is an old, but true saying,

*Quosmel est imbuta recens servabit Odorem  
Testa dice.*

"One thing I know, and so may you too, that a liar is *a child of the devil*, by the very same argument that the devil is a *liar*, and the father of it, John 8, 44; and for a parson to lie is an horrible shame. I must tell you, that long before your sermon appeared, not only the Archbishop of Canterbury, and several of that eminent order, but his Royal Highness, King George, and all the Royal Family, together with most of the Nobility, Gentry, &c. of the land, are, I bless God, better informed of the principles and conduct of the Methodists, than to fear any dangers from them to either church or state."†

The different members of the last cited paragraph from Mr. White's "Epistle Dedicatory," received attention in the "Answer," where they connected themselves with the "Sermon;" but as the charges were presented to his Grace, in the wholesale form, Mr. Grimshaw, more blunt than polite, returned a wholesale Answer, by labelling it with a "lie."

On the charge of *ignorance*, Mr. Grimshaw retorted, "A plain proof you know nought of the matter, otherwise your probability would have been a certainty; but, as it is, it is only a mere slander. And as to the ignorance of their followers of the contents of the 23d Article, I suppose many of them live in your own parish; and, if so, more shame for you to keep them in the dark, not only as to this, but all the other articles, particularly the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 17th, 18th, 31st, and 35th Articles, and the Homilies also, especially the first six of them. Holding these from your people (for what is it else, when you never read them to the congregation?) is almost like, and almost as bad, as clergy of the Church of Rome's withholding the holy Scriptures from

\* The quotation is from the "Epistle Dedicatory."

† Answer, p. 44.

theirs. May I further observe, in this case, you are not alone ; for the reading of the Homilies and Articles has been laid aside so long, by the generality of our clergy, till the people scarcely know whether there be any such things. Many who have gone forty, fifty, or sixty years to church, declare they never heard them read. For want of doing this more frequently, (and, indeed, once a year is seldom enough) our members gradually forget their first principles,—and the good old path is so utterly lost by us, that now, when the Lord is graciously pleased, instead of punishing as our apostacy deserved, to revive the religion of our forefathers, even the truth as it is in Jesus, by his servants, in reproach, called Methodists, the common cry is, ‘What means this new way!’—The disuse, I say, of the Homilies and 39 Articles of our religion, is certainly the chief occasion of all this mischief in our church. Had they been constantly read, it is very probable, that all these evils had not only been effectually prevented, but Methodism also, which is nothing else but the revival of the doctrines contained therein, had never appeared, these books, and what the Methodists preach, being all one. This, let me add, some few of our clergy are so well advised of, that they purposely evade the reading them to the people, for fear of increasing Methodism,—a term very likely made use of by the art of the devil, to prevent the true end of their ministry, I mean the making good christians and churchmen.—A certain old clergyman, of my acquaintance, lately deceased, being asked by his curate, if he might read the Homilies in the church, answered, no ; for, if he should do so, all the congregation would turn Methodists.”

In answer to the attack made on the Preachers, for want of proper ecclesiastical and other qualifications, he observed, “But would these people but read this 23d Article, ‘This they would find puts an end (say you) to any doubt with respect to the qualifications of preachers.’ If you have said any thing material against the Methodists in all your discourse, you have said it here ; and yet this Article only relates to the outward qualifications of preachers. I think there is an inward one of so much superior consequence and concern, that where it is wanting, the outward signifies nothing. The Bishops, perhaps, do all that can possibly be expected in the usual way, for their own and the church’s satisfaction, about the inward qualification, or call, of such as desire to be ordained to the ministry. They ask every deacon, ‘Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this office and ministration to serve God, for the promoting



of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" And the candidate replies, 'I trust so.' But is not the true and common motive, the getting a good living, a curacy, or bread? Was it not your's? I confess it was mine. How easily, and how often, the Bishops and the Church are imposed upon by such pretences, is but too evident from the lucrous, luxurious lives, of but too many of the brethren, who make their sacred function a mere trade, and gain their godliness. Lay what stress, therefore, you please, what confidence can the people repose upon this outward qualification?

"But, allowing all that you would make of this Article, it will not follow, that the Methodists reject it, by preaching without it. The truth is, (and shall I be afraid to speak it?) they cannot receive it. Our Saviour has, but man thinks it not proper to qualify them. Many of them want Latin, Greek, and Philosophy; and, therefore, though they have many far more needful accomplishments,—a good stock of plain, practical, experimental divinity, christian conversation, zeal towards God our Saviour, indefatigable industry in preaching the gospel, and many seals of their ministry, yet cannot be admitted thereto in the outward form. But what then? If God has ordained them, sent them forth, and owned and blessed their labours, shall they desist from their mission, till outwardly appointed thereto? 'What are we that we should withstand God?' Shall he not send by whom he will send? And when he is pleased to work by such instruments as you are displeased with, shall you or I let it? You may, indeed, do so; but I never will.

"What you affirm in the next paragraph, will appear, to every unprejudiced reader, as trifling and false as any thing you have said hitherto. The premises will clear them of that monstrous ignorance you would charge them with, in pretending to belong to our church, if their opposing her Articles be your argument to prove it by. Fact proves the very reverse: and the truth is, they actually maintain all the articles of our religion, and, consequently, are true members of our church. How they are guilty (as you assert in the next clause) of an excessive, invincible stubbornness also, on the same account, is to me unintelligible.

"In the next paragraph you may seem to have recourse to your logic, and to comprise the substance of the two foregoing pages in the compass and form of a syllogism, thus:

"According to the doctrine of the church of England, in the 23d Article, it is not lawful for any man to minister or preach in any congregation, except he be called to that office by men who have public authority.

“ ‘ Now these pretended preachers are not called to that office by men who have public authority.

“ ‘ Consequently, it is not lawful,’ &c.

“ Now although the major and minor propositions be granted, yet, I hope I have sufficiently proved, that the consequence is utterly false. One thing here I cannot but take notice of, which perhaps may have more in it than a mere quibble. It is in the manner of your expression, whether inadvertently or intentionally, you know best. By the 23d Article it is not lawful (you twice over say) to minister and preach in *any* congregation. The Article says only (and that twice over) in *the* congregation : now *any* and *the*, methinks, are terms that convey a very different idea to the mind ; *the* seems to import the congregation assembled in the church, and this seems to be the natural sense of the Article ; *any*, a congregation in any wise assembled for a religious purpose : if so, I cannot see how these preachers, by preaching or exhorting in their meetings, either break communion with the church, or condemn and violate, or in any wise infringe upon this Article, even your own way of speaking.

“ ‘ But in order to promote (you proceed) this scheme of confusion and irregularity.’ Whether such be the methodistical scheme has hitherto been falsely asserted, but not proved. I own, indeed, confusion is hereby occasioned, but it is by them who have made it the occasion ; who those are has been already taken notice of, and shall it therefore be charged any more upon the Methodists than that at Philippi, Acts, chap. xvi. upon Paul and Silas, or that at Athens, Acts, chap. xvii. upon Jason and the brethren, or that other at Ephesus, Acts, chap. xix. upon Paul, Gaius, and Aristarchus ?

“ ‘ But in order to promote this scheme of confusion, some of the leaders have found it necessary to usher in the notion of inspiration ; and to persuade a giddy multitude, that learning is no ways requisite to the duties of the ministry.’ If you mean human learning, or imagine that the Methodists mean so, (as, indeed, what can be meant else ?) I hope they are right. Read but the first and second chapters of St. Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, and there you will find they have a very good precedent for their pretence in St. Paul’s example and declaration. ‘ I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God ; my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power ; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power

of God. God hath revealed them (the gospel, that is to say, here called, the things which he hath prepared for them that love him) unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God: which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,' (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 5, 10, 13.) Why then should these men's assertion or pretension seem so strange to you; no man can or ought to preach the gospel before he be inspired with the Holy Ghost; or (which is all one) 'feels in himself a spirit, by which he is led to preach.' For, as the apostle says also, 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God,' (ibid. ver. 11, 12.) In this objection against the Methodists you manifestly discover the want of this spirit, this *indwelling teacher*, in yourself; and, consequently, however you are outwardly qualified, you have no right, authority, or commission at all to preach; any more than those vagabond Jews. exorcists, and the 'seven sons of Sceva, the priest, had to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus,' (Acts xix. 13, 14.)

" 'But let us inquire (in the next words) into the nature of this plea.' This, sir, may not be improper. 'Now, we must distinguish, say you, two kinds of inspiration, an extraordinary one, such as was granted to the apostles.' This I allow. And that it was granted them for such like purposes, as you assert in your next paragraph. This I own too. 'And that there is an ordinary, (*i. e.* as men now-a-days phrase it) such as we pray for in our collects of public prayer.' This I deny not. But this distinction in this place, sir, is nothing to the purpose: these men affirm, as you yourself say, 'That they feel in themselves a spirit, by which they are led to preach;' and that human learning and education are not necessary herein. 'This is the plea,' as you are pleased to call it. The question is, therefore, whether their pretence to such an inspiration, or motion (whether ordinary or extraordinary) of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel, be reasonable or unreasonable, needful or needless thereto. We have seen, sir, that St. Paul is clearly on their side, making it indispensably needful. But, being St. Paul was one of those apostles, who was endued with the extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the better to enable him to propagate the gospel in the world, and 'to remove (what otherwise would have



been impossible) the strong prejudices of 4000 years, &c.' his authority, I suppose, you will scarcely admit to be an argument to prove the case before us. Let us hear then the sentiments of our church, the ancient fathers quoted by her, and some pious and judicious divines, concerning this matter. Chrysostom, says our church, testifying thereby the approbation of the assertion, declares, 'That man's human and worldly wisdom and science are not needful to the understanding of Scripture; but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them, that with humility and diligence do search; therefore, he that asketh, shall have; and he that seeketh shall find; and he that knocketh, shall have the door opened.'\* Eusebius, which is another indication of her mind, 'tells, says she, a strange story of a certain learned and subtil philosopher, who, being an extreme adversary of Christ and his doctrine, could by no kind of learning be converted to the faith, but was able to withstand all the arguments that could be brought against him with little or no labour. At length there stands up a poor simple man, of small wit, and less knowledge, one that was reputed amongst the learned as an idiot, and he in God's name, would needs take in hand to dispute with this proud philosopher; the bishops and other learned men standing by, were marvellously abashed at the matter, thinking, that by his doing, they should all be confounded and put to open shame. He notwithstanding goes on, and beginning in the name of the Lord Jesus, brought the philosopher to such a point in the end, contrary to all men's expectation, that he could not choose but acknowledge the power of God in his words, and to give place to the truth.' 'Now,' says our church, 'Was not this a miraculous work, that one silly soul of no learning, should do that which many bishops of great knowledge and understanding were never able to bring to pass? So true, says she, is the saying of Bede: Where the Holy Ghost doth instruct and teach, there is no delay at all in learning.'†

St. Chrysostom says, 'That the wise man is not profited at all by his wisdom, nor the ignorant man prevented by his ignorance from receiving the preaching of the gospel; yea, if I may, says he, assert a wonderful truth, ignorance is more fit and apt to receive the gospel than wisdom: and a shepherd or ploughman (so far differs this venerable father from you in your margin, page 18) will sooner submit to it than a learned man, who relies on the strength of human wisdom and reason.'‡

\* Homily of Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 2d part.

† Homily for Whitsunday, 1st part.

‡ Chrys. Hom. 4th, in 1st Epist. ad Corinth.



"This very truth the Methodists have abundant experience of daily: I myself can produce some hundreds of instances of it, within the compass of my small ministry; and hope, sir, to see as many more before I die.

"But to proceed, Luther affirms, 'That it is an error to say, a man cannot be a divine, but by reading Aristotle,' (i. e.) by means of learning and education.) 'Nay,' says he, in the next words, 'He cannot be a divine, except he become one without Aristotle.'\*

"This same excellent servant of Christ has another strange expression (but which all the Methodists know to be true) which is this, 'A man is made a divine by living, yea by dying and damning, and not by instruction, reading, and study.'†

"And again, 'The Scriptures,' says he, 'are not to be understood, but by the same spirit, by which they were written: and that spirit can be found no where more present and lively than in those sacred letters which he himself hath written.'‡

"Zuinglius declares, 'We must needs be taught the gospel, not of men, but of God: for that it is the eternal truth, which knows not how to lie, (John 6 chap.) But if you do not firmly believe, that you may be taught of God, human doctrine being utterly rejected, you are still void of true faith. Neither, says he, have I myself invented this. For Hilary also is of the same opinion; but there is no need of his testimony, when we hear that Christ and his apostles were of the same mind.'§

"Calvin affirms, 'That it is necessary, that the same spirit, which spoke by the mouths of the prophets, should pierce into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully related what was by him delivered to them.'||

"Bishop Latimer, that blessed martyr, asserts, 'That carnal and philosophical understanding of the Scriptures is

\* Error est dicere, sine Aristotele non sit Theologus: Imo, Theologus non sit, nisi id fiat sine Aristotele. Luth. fol. 1st, page 10th.

† Vivendo, imo moriundo, et damnando, sit Theologus, non intelligendo, legendo, aut speculando. Luth. fol. 2. page 57.

‡ Scripturæ non nisi eo Spiritu intelligendæ sunt, quo scriptæ sunt. Qui Spiritus nusquam præsentius et vivacius, quam in ipsis sacris, suis quas scripsit, Literis inveniri, potest. Luth. fol. 2. page 300.

§ Zuingl. Lib. de Certitudine et Veritate Verbi Dei.

|| Idem Spiritus, qui per os prophetarum locutus est, in corda nostra penetret, necesse est: Ut persuadeat fideliter protulisse, quod divinitus erat mandatum. Calv. Institut. Lib. 1. cap. 8. sec. 4.

not that wisdom of God, which is hid from the wise, and revealed to babes.\*

"You see, sir, what the church, and these worthy divines say of the necessity of the continual presence of the Holy Ghost, to unfold the sacred writings to the understandings of both teachers and hearers, and how small account they made of learning and education in this matter. The very same, and no other, do the Methodists maintain. This therefore being all they pretend to; all that you say about the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, the occasion of them in the church, and also their ceasing, for upwards of two pages following, is quite foreign to the case of the Methodists, and the very design you would serve by it.

If they affirm no more, what need of such a long harangue of nonsense about ordinary and extraordinary inspiration? If they also have our church on their side for all that they say of their own inspiration, and the insignificance of learning and education, or at least the non-necessity (if I may so speak) of it for a preacher of the Gospel; and if the Holy Ghost makes divines, as is evident from the premises; why should they be thought to blame in asserting that they have a motion of the Spirit to preach? Why should they be charged 'With giving way to gloomy imaginations, or raising themselves to such a pitch of enthusiasm?' How can you charge these people of God, these servants of our dear Saviour, without reflecting upon the Holy Ghost and his gracious inspiration, and the sending forth of his ministers, in the foulest manner? I hope, in pity to your poor soul, that your ignorance will screen you, or else I really do not see how you can be clear of the commission of the unpardonable sin. You talk, poor man, of reason, of just reflection, and the firmness of a man; but where appears it? Are you not also at the same time casting dirt upon your own church? Are you not flatly denying, and maliciously ridiculing what she maintains; even that church are not you yourself, 'Flying in the face of, which you craftily pretend to follow?' Fy for shame.

"Your own words, in the latter end of the last paragraph, (page 14th) will allow a very obvious and easy inference in favour of the Methodists as to this very point, viz., that inspiration is, and human learning and education are not, requisite and necessary for a minister of the gospel. For you

\* Carnalis et philosophica Scripturarum intelligentia, non est Sapientia Dei, quæ a sapientibus absconditur, parvulis revelatur. Latimer's Answer to Sir Edward Bainton's Letter.

say that amongst other designs of God in inspiring the apostles in an extraordinary manner, this was one, 'To convince the world that the system of the redemption was not a system of learning.' From hence then we may infer, that this system requires not learning and education to support it, and to preach the doctrines of it. One may reasonably suppose that that which has no learning in it, may be understood and explained without learning. We may likewise reasonably suppose, that the same Divine Spirit which gave us this system of the redemption, will himself instruct us in the true sense of it. As our Saviour says, 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' John xiv, 26.

To the charge instituted against the preachers, of making a *gain of godliness*, he replied:

"In the next words you fall upon Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley. Mr. Whitefield, you are pleased censoriously to charge with what the world do, or may know to be a lie: 'That a satisfactory account has not been given us of Mr. Whitefield's disbursements in Georgia, and I am afraid, by his late modest insinuations, in or about the highlands of Scotland, of the want of five hundred pounds, &c.

"Mr. Wesley's fellowship, I am credibly informed, is about an £100 per annum, out of which £30 are deducted by the college for non-residence; the remainder, with the profits arising from the sale of his books, are so entirely laid out in carrying on the great and good work he is engaged in, that he scarcely provides necessaries for himself. This is a true relation of that good man's estate, of whom you are pleased roundly and falsely to affirm, 'That he has a better income than most of our bishops.' Prove your assertion. 'And as to the under-hand lay-praters, (as you call them) I have reason to assert, &c. they may be supposed to be in a better way of living than the generality of our vicars and curates.' This you likewise would impose upon the world for truth. Pray, make a careful, impartial enquiry into this matter; you may do it with little trouble, no expence, and in your own parish. What can a penny or two, once a fortnight, from the abler sort, do for them? The poor are excused, and no one obliged to give any thing. Were the generality of vicars and curates no better provided for; were their livings as poor and precarious; and their labours as indispensably painful and irksome, there would be none such

striving for them, nor half so many, as, it is to be feared, there are, ready, Ananias and Sapphira like, to lie to the Holy Ghost, in saying ‘they are moved,’ &c. &c.

Mr. White’s objection to the *occupation* of some of the preachers, called forth the pleasantry rather than the gravity of his opponent.

“I shall only take notice of this one thing more in your marginal reference, and that is, the offence you take at men attempting to preach, ‘Who have never been conversant further than the plough.’ A plough, Sir! an edifying machine! Were you well at it, it would not only best become the name you are pleased to give yourself of *Agricola Candidus*,\* but possibly you might receive the first true call to the ministry from thence: a plough may make as good a priest as a popish academy; try the experiment awhile, and who knows but — Should you think it a disgrace to follow a lay-prater from that instrument, remember, for your credit and comfort, that Elisha was ploughing with twelve yokes of oxen, when he was called to succeed Elijah in the prophetic office, 1 Kings xix. 19, 20; and St. Chrysostom, afore observed, has spoken very honourably of a ploughman. Where, then, can be the harm or shame in such a call? However, *Ne sævi, magne Sacerdos*. Be not offended; I only propose it.

A variety of other objections were either maliciously invented or ignorantly palmed upon the Methodists, all of which were honestly and fairly met; and if not acutely and dexterously overturned, at least *satisfactorily* answered. The following are a few more selected from the general mass.

“Page 21, you hasten to your second proposition, under which you pretend to lay down ‘Such persuasive inferences or observations, as may possibly prevent all this confusion and other notorious ill consequences.’

“The first is an entreaty ‘Of this set of people, to look into themselves with a little more circumspection and impartiality; to examine the prejudices of their hearts, and what real grounds they have to rebel against the canons and articles of the best of churches.’ Physician, heal thyself: pray pull the beam out of your own eye. This entreaty concerns not the Methodists, as being no violaters, but asserters, of them, at least in a fuller manner than the generality of her pretended members do.

\* In English *George*, alias Husbandman *White*.



“In the next paragraph, pregnant with a variety of false insinuations, you beg ‘Of them to consider how our dissenting enemies will triumph on this fresh disunion.’ When you or they can prove that the Methodists occasion a fresh disunion by their present conduct, both you and they may triumph.

“‘Industrious trade, also, in consequence of so many constant attendances on this new model of worshipping the Creator,’ (as old, however, as the days of our Lord and his Apostles,) ‘will become an idle concern,’ Sir, in my own, in others, and I dare say, in your parish also, the constant attenders on this *new model of worship*, as you falsely call it, are more industrious in their trade and other occupations, and maintain their families better than ever they did before.

“But, sir, I make the following appeal to your own conscience, whether you do not believe that trade receives more obstruction and real detriment, in one week, from numbers that run a hunting; from numbers more, that allow themselves, in various idle diversions, an hour, two, or sometimes three daily, for what is vulgarly called a Noon-sit; and from many yet more, who loiter away their precious time, on a market day in your town, in drunkenness, janglings, and divers frivolous matters, than from all that give the constantest attendance to this new model of worship, in the space of two or three months. Admitting these people are in an error, is not their conduct, rather than that of those others, more likely to bring a blessing to your trade? But supposing that this model of worship, so contemptible in your eye, be truly Christian, as I hope, is evidently proved before, and consequently altogether agreeable to the will of God, must not its devotees be those only, in whose hands, by whose means, and for whose sakes God will prosper it?

“‘Consider’ say you in the next place, ‘how family affairs will suffer an inevitable neglect.’ This is as groundless and disingenuous an insinuation as the last. You seem willing to say any thing, rather than say true. This requires a general proof, for an instance or two, in such a case as this, amounts to no more than only to shew that the bad behaviour of a few may blemish a good cause, and the otherwise irreproveable conduct of the whole. This is a common device of Satan; and you seem, as well in this as in most you have said hitherto, mightily inclined to second *Old Harry*. But you only surmise that family affairs will suffer. Remember, *will* is one tense, and *doth* is another. Do family concerns, therefore, and that in a general way, suffer what you, as boldly, as basely, term an *inevitable neglect*?

“‘A neglect,’ you add, ‘which may unfortunately prevent the education of children.’ What education is here meant? Is it in *literature*, in *religion*, or (which you seem most concerned for) in *trade*? Have any of the Methodists, who had aforetime designed to have given their children a liberal education, taken them from school since, or neglected to keep them constantly thereto; or do they not mind to bring them up in religion, in the *nurture* and *admonition*, and to the praise and glory of the Lord, so well as before. I doubt not, but upon an ingenuous inquiry, you will find that they do it much better; yea, many will be found to do this now, that never did, nor perhaps never would have done it, had they never followed the Methodists. How many in your parish take the same care that these people do in this respect? Or, lastly, do they not in general (for an instance or two, as aforesaid, can be no exception) teach and inure their children to trade, and industry therein, as well, if not much better, now than before? Surely, then, Methodism can, in this respect, be no occasion of the *ruin of a rising generation*. Away, then, for shame, with such malicious *prognostications* and malevolent *may be’s*.

“The substance of your next paragraph might be readily granted:—The Methodists deny not learning and education to be useful for the purposes you mention, or that such evils, as you intimate, might possibly attend the want of them. Something not unlike this has been in hand before: but is this, that you have said in this place, all that you intend by learning and education? No; we are to guess at something that better connects with the rest of your discourse; and that we must gather out of the margin; namely, that they despise learning and education for the uses of ‘Demonstratively proving the veracity of the Holy Scriptures; reconciling their apparent contradictions; or explaining in a masterly taste, like a worthy teacher, the sacraments and the new covenant. At this distance of time, idioms also, customs, and national proverbs are to be well known and digested for these purposes; but how, without the above-mentioned qualifications.’ The Methodists despise not learning on these accounts either.

“This they believe, that learning, even on these accounts, is not as necessary in these days as formerly. There are so many comments and expositions upon the Old and New Testament, done by the most able authors, both ancient and modern, that little more can or need be added for the understanding of the sacred text. I think there are far too many already extant, insomuch that thereby the genuine

sense, in many places, is rather obscured than illustrated; and this, I should think, should be a sufficient warning, by the bye, not to lean too much upon human learning and education in these respects: for which reason the Methodists, as many truly wise and pious men have done before them, prefer experimental divinity to all *letter-learned performances*, and esteem it to be the best spring to practical religion. The Holy Ghost alone teaches, and the heart learns this. The other, man teaches, and the head receives. In this, all our wisest rabbies and most sage philosophers are mere fools; and the most illiterate Methodists, brought up at the *loom* or *anvil*, quite outstrip and confound them, as I have before shewn. This learning, not all the universities in Europe are able to teach; and yet no one without this, notwithstanding the advantage of the most eminent natural and acquired parts, ought to assume the offices of the priesthood. This has been already taken notice of.

“‘Believe me,’ say you in the next words; (but who can believe you after so many palpable untruths?) but, ‘believe me, the pretence of religion has perhaps occasioned the greatest calamities, and served as a cloke, even to the most inhuman murders and plunderings, the most insatiable avarice and lust.’ But which way, and by whom? This I have already shewn. I shall only add, that in this, not only I, but any one, may believe you. You pretend to religion, and so do all the banditti you lately headed, and at the same time have thoroughly convinced the world, what mischief and confusion pretences to religion can make. You herein have full well proved, Sir, the old proverb to be true, *that a parson’s preaching and life should be all of a piece*.

“Therefore, it can be no reflection upon your character, I hope, to quote your own words in the close of your sermon, in this place. ‘I must beg leave to assure you, that the sense of duty I owe to my God,’ (to my God too) does not your text tell you, ‘God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.’ Pray, who is your God then? Surely not this God: the God you serve, if we may conjecture from your conduct, is a god of confusion: and who can this be but the devil? who, you know, is for this very reason called *Diabolus*, (*a scatterer abroad, or maker of confusion*) by the Greeks and Romans. But, however, ‘I must beg leave to assure you, that the sense of duty I owe to my God, the obligations I am under, not only as a regular minister, (regular indeed!) but as a rational inhabitant (rational, there again! *Risum teneatis, Amici?* to see honest industry flourish, instead of



superstitious idleness, will always give me true courage (poor man!) to oppose, to the uttermost, attempts (with your leave, Sir, by the Methodists unattempted) so unnatural and unjust.' Thou art the man! That the Methodists are a disorderly people, you have, indeed, over and over asserted, but never once proved. May it not, therefore, be adviseable to take your own counsel, 'Let us beware, lest we take superstition for religion, the degradation of human reason, the weakness of the brain, a dream of the night, (and, let me add, *a drum-head at Colne-Cross*) terrifying indeed, where there is no danger.'

"True religion, you proceed, being a system of real reason, will always stand the test of a judicious inquiry.' So it is, and so it will; and to this I freely submit my account of the methodistical doctrines. But one thing seems all along wanting on your part, and that is, to let us know what you call *true religion*; you have guessed well, indeed, at the blessings attending it, but whilst that is wanting, this avails little.

"In page the 20th, one might have thought, that *repentance, a change of heart, and conversion to God*, had meant at least, what most moralists make of them, a turning from an evil to a good life. But how far your conceptions of religion come short even of this, the next paragraph informs us: 'True religion was never intended to sour our tempers, to give us a melancholy turn of countenance, or even to deprive us of the decent conveniences and innocent amusements of life.' The very language of an epicure! The dialect of a rake or debauchee! Doctrines adapted to the very purpose of promoting licentiousness and libertinism. It is said, I confess, on all sides, that the Methodists *preach people beside their senses*. But you, it seems, choose another way, viz. with the 'priests of Israel, to heal the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly,' Jer. vi. 14. To you, we are to suppose, it is a grievous offence, and an egregious error, that these praters teach, that no one must frequent ale-houses, fairs, pastimes, or diversions of any sort, upon pain of eternal damnation; and that if men hunt, game, or play at tables, cards, or dice, &c., they must go to hell. 'By this means they sour men's tempers, and deprive them of the decent conveniences and innocent amusements of life.' But you say also in these cases, 'peace, peace, when there is no peace?' (ibid.) And thus, as it is with the people, so it is with the priest. By this we may plainly see what a preacher of repentance and conversion you are, or rather how little you



are acquainted with either. Had you ever experienced aright the weight and burden of sin, the irksomeness of guilt, a wounded spirit, the wrath of God, the condemnation and curse of his law, and the fearful apprehensions of judgment to come: had you ever felt what David, Psal. vi. 6; the publican. Luke xviii. 13; or the three thousand, Acts ii. 37; or the jailor did, Acts xvi. 29, you would scorn to talk so wildly of a soured temper, or a melancholy turn of countenance. Conviction, or, which is the same thing, repentance, (to which I have spoken before) is necessarily attended, I must tell you, with such a temper. Whoever are strangers to this, are strangers to true conversion and religion; but such as have experienced these things, can no more dispense with what, it is but too evident, you call decent conveniences or innocent amusements, no, not a jest or vain word, than they can with the grossest act of murder or adultery; and yet you have affirmed, 'We (as if you did) preach up repentance, &c. as highly necessary.'

"You proceed, 'Rather let us look on the great Deity, as the compassionate Father of mankind.' Strange divinity! These words, if they mean any thing, mean what is most impious and profane. You represent that Holy One, 'who is of purer eyes than to behold evil,' Hab. i. 13, as a compassionate father to such as live in it; as one that connives at innocent diversions, as you term it, and will never punish for them, though nothing be more certain from his own words than the contrary, Eccles. xi. 9. This delusory doctrine has caused many poor men, on a dying bed, to look back on a life thus spent, as no bad one, or of the least dangerous consequence to their eternal welfare; nor are they, as they ought to be, exhorted by their ghostly fathers to repent thereof, upon pain of their everlasting ruin. Or should they conscientiously or cursorily mention these follies, it is commonly passed by with an, 'Oh! God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss; he will never enter into judgment with you on these accounts: they are frivolous trifles, or rather, such beneficial recreations to human life, as God does rather approve, than blame us for.' Yes, O blind leader of such blind, the Almighty, wise, and just God, I again aver, will as certainly, and everlastingly, if not as severely, punish the smallest vanity or diversion, as the most heinous and atrocious parricide. Good Lord, deliver us from such soul-physicians as these be! How must Satan and Hell be beholden to such! What numbers, may we greatly fear, are thus decoyed into that 'bottomless lake, where the worm

dieth not, and the fire is never quenched,' Mark ix. 44. It is shocking to hear, that that very compassion and mercy, which principally moved God 'to send his only begotten Son into the world,' to save us from eternal death, should be made use of as an argument to involve us in it. Thus much in answer to your sermon. If any thing may seem to be spoken with too much warmth, impute it not to anger, or want in any wise of charity and benevolence, but to a well-meant zeal for the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' and its votaries: if you will not, you are welcome to do as you please. What I desire to add more is, only a few general observations upon Methodism, and a word of exhortation to all sorts of people.

"Methodism, so called by way of reproach, is a complete system of gospel truths, and a perfect summary of reformation-principles. The more ingenuously and attentively men search into it, the more evident and undeniable will this appear. It therefore needs must, and accordingly does, gain the esteem and approbation of many of every denomination. Notwithstanding the general opposition made to it on all sides, it daily gains ground. Its progress, considering how few years it is since its first appearance, is surprisingly extensive. It has all the marks and indications of a divine work. It ascribes the total of a man's salvation to the mere free grace of God, the sole merits of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Ghost. It makes faith the instrument, Jesus's blood the cause, and the discoverer of our justification. It attributes our sanctification wholly to this heavenly paraclete. It makes Christ the Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith. Its sect is every where spoken against. It holds forth, not the form merely, but the life and power of godliness also."

A greater latitude of quotation has been indulged, than would have otherwise been deemed proper, had it not been to exemplify something of the spirit of the times—the first public controversy which professes to come within the limits of the work—and for the difficulty of procuring either the "Sermon" or the "Answer," in a separate form. The "Answer," it is true, has been republished by Mr. Myles, in his *Life of Mr. Grimshaw*: but even there, in its appended situation, a comparatively slender portion of the members of the Wesleyan Family have been furnished with the perusal of its pages. In glancing over the whole of the objections, both those which have been noticed and those which will continue to repose themselves in the "Answer," it will be found that many of them are precisely of the same character with those

which were instituted against the Apostles and primitive teachers of Christianity—such as have been urged against any extraordinary work of God in every age—such as the carnal heart might be conceived capable of inventing, in order to shield itself in its depravity—and such, as already observed, as have accompanied Methodism in all its stages. The objections advanced by every new assailant, resemble so many old coins turning up to the eye of the medalist, which he instantly recognizes as either having already in his cabinet, or having fingered them with feelings peculiar to himself before; or perhaps, more properly, like the face of an old enemy, upon which a person unexpectedly pounces, on turning the sharp angle of one of the most public streets of a large town,—one of the last places in which, in order to avoid detection, the man should dare to have appeared without a mask. From the period of penning these pages, to the day that Methodism first made its appearance, many a George White, like another Shimei, has “gone along on the hill’s side over against” the Methodists, “and cursed,” and thrown “stones” at them, and “cast dust” upon them, as they have proceeded with devotion and humility “by the way of” human life: and though a Grimshaw has been occasionally permitted to go out of the ranks, it has not been with a view to fulminate the wrath of God in return, but to chastise the temerity of such as have egregiously committed themselves—to preserve the equally wicked but less courageous at bay—and to protect the character of calumniated innocence. How far the pastor of Colne profitted by the castigation of the vicar of Haworth, is not for the present generation to determine; but as no formal reply has descended to posterity, and no notice of any can be found, it is not unlikely that he was afraid to hazard another engagement, and might possibly attempt to reconcile his friends to his silence, by stating, like many others, incapable of self-defence, that the “Answer” was beneath his notice; an excuse very convenient for the inventor, without the true meaning of which every man of sense will be able to perceive in the strength of his opponents cause. Mr. Grimshaw stood like a reproving conscience before his opposer, and the pages of his reply must have stared him in the face like so many unrepented sins.

Whatever were the effects produced by the pen of Mr. White, and the missile weapons of his forces, he was at least convinced of his own impotency, and found himself as inadequate to the extirpation of Methodism in Colne, as he was

incapable of damping the ardour of its friends in other directions.

Haworth Society in particular, was in a state of prosperity, both in reference to its finances, and its religious concerns; so much so indeed, as to possess both the heart and the ability to communicate of its abundance to others. On a piece of paper pinned to a leaf of the Haworth Society Book, are the following memorandums, in the hand-writing of Mr. Grimshaw: "April 19, 1749. *Lent* the Brethren at Halifax, £1 10 6."—"July 11, 1749. *Given* to Halifax Society towards defraying the Law Charge, £1 10 6."

The Resolution which had passed in the Leaders' Meeting, as noticed in the book belonging to Miss Lacey, in the course of the preceding year, was also entered by Mr. Grimshaw into the Haworth Society Book, with some important additions. He states the *place* of meeting to have been at "Todmorden-Edge;"—the *Societies* for which Stewards had been chosen, to have been "Rossendale, Rough-Lee, Hepponstall, Todmorden, &c."—and the *object* of their election to be that of entrusting them with power "to transact the temporal affairs" of the Societies. Then follows an interesting "Memorandum: It was then agreed that if there be any just cause to exchange any of the above Stewards, it shall be done at the next quarterly meeting held for the said Societies, by the approbation of the Leaders then present. Note, if any dispute arise touching the choosing of a Steward or Stewards, the greater number of voices shall have the choice to elect a fresh Steward. This shall be mentioned to our Minister, Mr. John Wesley, or his successor, who shall end any dispute of this kind."\*

\* Notices of curious, and other entries, will frequently occur in the progress of this work, all of which will have their use in exhibiting either the poverty or wealth of the body, the uses of the monies, passing events, the prices of articles, or the circumstances in which Societies or individuals have been placed, as well as informing us of the preachers labouring in the neighbourhood at the time. Among other entries in the Haworth Society Book, are to be found: "Jan. 10, 1748. A pair of boots for Wm. Darney, 14s."—"Oct. 23d. 1755. Paid for Jonathan Maskew's shirts and stockings, 14s. 10d."—"To Jonathan Maskew's hat, 5s."—"July 22, 1756. To two shirts for Jonathan Maskew, 13s."—"To three cravats for Do. 3s."—"To pumps, 6s."—"To stockings, 3s. 6d."—"Oct. 21. 1756. To Jonathan Maskew's coat, £1 12s. 6d."—"To Wm. Parker for Jonathan Maskew's stocks, 4s. 9d."—"To Jonathan Maskew's coat making, 4s. 6d."—"To Do. for Gamash's, 7s. 6d."—"April 1782. A pair of shoes for Mr. Wesley." These items shew the appropriation of the monies. The Preachers had no regular board till many years after this. Whenever they were in want of suitable raiment or other necessities, and were without personal or other property, they had no resource to which they could resort, but to the Steward, who furnished them with a supply. Not any thing, connected with the personal history of Mr. Wesley, has excited the admiration of the writer more, in the examination of Society Records, than a number of minute entries, relative to his wearing apparel, &c. The pride of the human heart might suppose some persons to wish the suppression of such things; but they are here suspended as trophies to his honour; for what stronger evidences can there be of his condescension, his disinterestedness, and his benevolence than these! With grace and talents, that would add dignity to the mitre, he nevertheless directs his attention to the poor, and only solicits a pair of shoes, to preserve his feet from the mud, while travelling for their welfare! Though the head of the body, yet asking for



The old book at Haworth, which was used both for the Society and the Circuit—such as the Circuit then was, affords indubitable proof, that Mr. Grimshaw was not only the *Superintendent* or *Assistant* of the Haworth Circuit, but that he acted in the capacity of **CIRCUIT STEWARD**, and as such regularly kept the *Circuit Accounts*: and to all the other peculiarities of Methodism, which have risen before the reader—risen out of the circumstances of the case—and proceeded with the gradual advance of spring, must be added the novelty of a “**QUARTERLY MEETING**.” This, though the first intimation of any thing of the kind in this part of the country, had been established apparently for some length of time, which is evidently implied by the expression, “At the *next* quarterly meeting.”

Such was the poverty of the Halifax Society at this period, that what had been *lent* to the Members in April was *given* to them in July. The “*law charge*” referred to by Mr. Grimshaw, was probably connected with some indictment for riotous proceedings, as we find “the town in an uproar,” and the “people roaring like the waves of the sea,” during a recent visit from Mr. Wesley.—One of the members at this time, and who afterwards became rather unusually conspicuous, was Titus Knight. He was a poor collier, deeply involved in debt, became acquainted with the Methodists, experienced the renewing power of divine grace, and united himself to the infant—persecuted Society. Among others was a poor woman, who had been blind from childhood, and lived to the advanced age of between eighty and ninety years. When she joined the Society she had but three-halfpence per day allowed her for her maintenance, with part of which she generally contrived to secure, what she deemed one substantial meal of bread and milk towards noon. Out of this regular stipend, however, together with any casual relief which she might obtain, she not only contributed to her class, but even subscribed with the other poor members towards the liquidation of Titus Knight’s debt. She was remonstrated with by her christian friends for giving that which they deemed

no more than food and raiment at the hands of his inferiors! Of all the thousands he might have amassed, and was really said to have amassed, he did not withhold from his acts of benevolence as much as would purchase a pair of shoes, but had to be indebted for a pair to the Haworth Society! While Dr. Johnson was at College, a friend perceiving his penury, delicately placed a pair of shoes at the door of his room for his acceptance; but his haughty spirit spurned them from his path. Pride, in the one case, was linked to poverty; and humility, with all its associate toils, was preferred by the other to wealth and splendour. The moralist may laud the Doctor for true elevation of soul, and may admire his sentiments on the subject of humility, as expressed in his works; but the christian will prefer the practical exposition of the principle as furnished by Mr. Wesley, as best comporting with the example of Him who was “meek and lowly in heart,” and who had “not where to lay his head.”

essential to the supply of her own necessities ; but their remarks availed nothing : her circumstances had reduced the principle of self-denial to a habit, and she possessed a magnanimity of soul which gave an air of wealth to poverty, and produced the effects of benevolence without the enlarged means of relieving the multitude. Her very example was charity, and drew that from others which she could not in every instance effect herself. Through her and others, Titus was enabled to look his creditors in the face ; and when the first “preaching-house,” so called, was erected in Halifax, Mr. Wesley, in conjunction with the friends, allowed him the use of it, as a day-school, for the purpose of instructing children. In this way, he was enabled to support himself and his family ; and here it was that his own children first received the knowledge of their letters—one of whom afterwards became a dissenting minister, another a surgeon, and two more entered the established church. One of the latter, was the late Rev. S. Knight, Vicar of Halifax, who also brought up his sons for the Establishment, one of whom is at present a respectable clergyman in Sheffield. Titus soon became an useful local preacher, and in that character he stands in the course of the present year.\*

In the month of October, Mr. Wesley visited Lancashire and Cheshire. “Wednesday 18th,” says he, “I rode, at the desire of John Bennet, to Rochdale, in Lancashire. As soon as ever we entered the town, we found the streets lined, on both sides, with multitudes of people, shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and gnashing upon us with their teeth. Perceiving it would not be practicable to preach abroad, I went into a large room, open to the street, and called aloud, ‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.’ The word of God prevailed over the fierceness of man. None opposed or interrupted ; and there was a very remarkable change in the behaviour of the people, as we afterwards went through the town.

“We came to Bolton about five in the evening. We had no sooner entered the main street, than we perceived the lions at Rochdale were lambs in comparison of those at Bolton. Such rage and bitterness I scarce ever saw before, in any creatures that bore the form of men. They followed us in full cry to the house where we went ; and as soon as we were gone in, took possession of all the avenues to it, and filled the street from one end to the other. After some

\* Myles's Chronol. Hist. p. 447.

time the waves did not roar quite so loud. Mr. P. thought he might then venture out. They immediately closed in, threw him down, and rolled him in the mire; so that when he scrambled from them, and got into the house again, one could scarcely tell what or who he was. When the first stone came among us through the window, I expected a shower to follow, and the rather because they had procured a bell to call their whole forces together; but they did not design to carry on the attack at a distance. Presently one ran up and told us the mob had bursted into the house; he added that they had got J. B. in the midst of them. They had; and he laid hold on the opportunity to tell them of 'the terrors of the Lord.' Meantime D— T— engaged another part of them with smoother and softer words. Believing the time was now come, I walked down into the thickest of them. They had now filled all the rooms below. I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word. What a turn was this! O how did God change the counsel of the old Ahithopel into foolishness! and bring all the drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, and mere sinners in the place, to hear of his plenteous redemption!

"Thursday 19. Abundantly more than the house could contain were present at five in the morning, to whom I was constrained to speak a good deal longer than I am accustomed to do. Perceiving they still wanted to hear, I promised to preach again at nine, in a meadow near the town. Thither they flocked from every side; and I called aloud, 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage.' O how have a few hours changed the scene! We could now walk through every street of the town, and none molested, or opened his mouth, unless to thank or bless us.

"At one I preached at Shackerley, four miles from Bolton, and thence rode on to Davyhulme. Here I received a letter from Richard Cawley, of Alpraham, with an invitation from the Minister of Acton. After preaching in the morning at Davyhulme, and about ten at Boothbank, in the afternoon, Friday the 20th, I rode on, and between four and five came to Alpraham. A large congregation was waiting for me, whom I immediately called to seek 'God while he may be found.' Many came again at five in the morning, and seemed not only just ready to repent, but also 'Believe the Gospel.'

“Saturday 21. By conversing with several here, I found we were not now among publicans and sinners, but among those who awhile ago supposed they, ‘needed no repentance.’ Many of them had been long ‘exercising themselves unto godliness,’ in much the same manner as we did at Oxford; but they were now thoroughly willing to renounce their own, and accept ‘the righteousness which is of God by faith.’

“A gentleman, who had several years before heard me preach at Bath, sending to invite me to dinner, I had three or four hours’ serious conversation with him. O who maketh me to differ? Every objection he made to the christian system has passed through my mind also; but God did not suffer them to rest there, or to remove me from the hope of the Gospel.

“I was not surprized when word was brought me that the Vicar of Acton had not the courage to stand to his word; neither was I troubled. I love indeed to preach in a church; but God can work wherever it pleaseth Him.

“Sunday 22. I preached at seven in Richard Cawley’s house; and about one at Little Acton. We then rode on to Woor; and the next afternoon came, wet and weary enough, to Wednesbury.\*

Mr. Wesley appears to have proceeded directly from Rochdale to Bolton, without touching at Manchester. This omission seems a little singular at first, when cursorily examined; particularly as there was now an infant Society in the town to invite him, and a place—humble as it was, in which he could give them the meeting; and more especially as he had previously broken down the barrier of those delicacies of feeling and sentiment which appeared to connect themselves with Mr. Clayton, by having preached at Salford-cross. But it is necessary to dive into the depths of the case; and by proceeding beyond the hallowed precincts of religion, the reader will be able to perceive the cause of omission in the spirit of the times, and in the opposite political opinions of the two men. Mr. Wesley knew that he could not often repeat his visits to Manchester without coming into contact with his old collegiate friend; and had accident thrown them together at this time, he might have indirectly subjected himself to part of the odium under which the latter was partially labouring.

\* Journals, 8vo. edit. published in numbers, p. 124, for the year 1749. It is remarkable that this account should be omitted in the early 12mo. editions of the Journals, as published in connexion with his other works.



Few places had suffered more, through political squabbles, during the period of the Scotch Rebellion than Manchester; and Mr. Clayton, who was far from standing alone in the Establishment, warmly espoused the Jacobite side of the question. While Prince Charles was at the Palace Inn, he paid his personal respects to him, and in the view of the Whigs, was characterized as his domestic chaplain. Whitworth's "*Manchester Magazine*" was the only newspaper published in the town; and its editor refused to print for the Pretender and his party. The consequence was, that the friends of the House of Stewart were obliged to send every article, however small, to the city of Chester, where it met with a ready insertion in the "*Chester Courant*,"—a three days' job in those days of bad roads. These inconveniences were remedied by the late Mr. Joseph Harrop, who had been an apprentice with Whitworth, and who is said to have been assisted by Mr. Clayton and others to procure a press, and set up in opposition to his late master. The Whig party—though with what degree of justice is unknown, considered Mr. Clayton as a contributor to the materials which filled Mr. Harrop's paper. The "war of words" was maintained with the greatest acrimony from the period of the Rebellion to the termination of 1748; and in the course of this year the papers were collected, and presented to the public, in a 12mo volume of 324 pages.\* It was a period when it was almost impossible for a man to neutralize either his sentiments or his conduct; and in the act of filing off, whether to the right or to the left, he was certain to receive an arrow from the bow of an archer. Mr. Clayton, as a public character, had not the smallest chance of escape. Accordingly, in a paper addressed to Mr. Whitworth, for insertion in the "*Manchester Magazine*," dated Nov. 20, 1746, professing to be a reply to another which had appeared in the "*Chester Courant*," he meets with a public rebuke. The writer, adverting to some expressions hostile to government, observes, "But that the sober as well as the drunken have been guilty of this practice, we had a most indecent instance, among many others, in one of Mr. C—'s senior scholars,† who, about two *Sundays ago*, affronted a lady at the close of the service of the church, with a *Down with the Rump*, more than once,—but this is very pardonable in the scholar, since

\* It is becoming rather scarce, and is entitled "MANCHESTER VINDICATED: being a Complete COLLECTION of the PAPERS lately published in Defence of that TOWN, in the *Chester Courant*. Together with all those on the other Side of the QUESTION, printed in the *Manchester Magazine*, or elsewhere, which are answered in the said *Chester Courant*. CHESTER: Printed by and for Eliz. Adams. 1749."

† Mr. Clayton kept a School in Salford.

that was a health at the Master's Table."\* On the 10th of Nov. 1747, another allusion is made to Mr. Clayton in an article which appeared in the "Chester Courant," where the writer notices "The Rector and Curates of St. A—'s,"† whom he ironically exempts from disloyalty. The subject was again revived many years afterward, in a caricature which may possibly be noticed at the period of its publication, and in which—as in all such cases where party spirit is in operation, Mr. Clayton was exhibited in not the most favourable light. Mr. Wesley, on the other hand, gave a decided preference to the House of Brunswick. The Rebellion compelled them both to show their colours; and as Mr. Clayton differed with Mr. Wesley on the subject of religion, and had withdrawn from him his countenance and support; so Mr. Wesley might be equally disinclined to sanction him in his views on the subject of civil government. For them to have met at present would have probably been to the discomfort of both, and might possibly have added to the distance which already subsisted. Though Mr. Wesley, after he began to itinerate, was doubtlessly deterred some time from entering Manchester, because of Mr. Clayton's partial coldness; yet, having once overstepped the line of demarkation, there appeared no substantial reason why an interview should not take place. The three years' political contest affords a more satisfactory explanation of such perpetuated distance, than any other argument that can be offered. Mr. Wesley entered the town in the spring of 1747, when it was nearly at its zenith; and he had seen and heard too much of the spirit which it engendered in his travels, to approach the fire when it could be avoided. Though the Established Church and the Presbyterians, are noticed as having taken high ground on the occasion in the town, the Methodists are never once introduced; a proof either of the simplicity of their demeanour, or the insignificance of their numbers.

There appears to have been a speciality about this visit, which scarcely reached any of those that preceded. In one, Mr. Wesley is observed to have "*Accompanied John Bennet into Lancashire;*" and in another, to have "*preached at several places in Lancashire and Cheshire, at John Bennet's request.*" But this was not a *general* visit to the several Societies; many important places to the right and to the left, as well as on their route, were omitted; and Rochdale, in connexion with Bolton, were the particular objects of attention.

\* Ibid. p. 20.

† Manchester Vind. p. 279.

The tumultuous conduct of the people will show, that the friends of Methodism in each place, could not be in circumstances the most comfortable, while such hostile feelings were in operation. But "the *desire* of John Bennet" was to accomplish another object. He had entered into the marriage state little more than a fortnight before, with a person for whom Mr. Wesley entertained the highest esteem, and to whom, there was some reason to believe, he intended to offer his hand.\* Mr. Charles Wesley not altogether approving of the connexion, and afraid of its consummation during the visit of his brother to the north, hastened, if not partly contrived, another union in order to defeat his design. John Bennet was therefore married to the female, whose name was Mrs. Grace Murray, in the parish-church of St. Andrew's, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the presence of the Rev. Charles Wesley and the Rev. George Whitfield, Oct. 3d, 1749. Some verses† which were written by Mr. John Wesley on the occasion, in the course of the same month, afford strong indications of the poignancy of his feelings. Those feelings, however, were so chastised by the grace of God, as to save him from resentment, and preserve him in the regular exercise of the ministry. At Bolton in particular, which was afterwards permitted to be the scene of religious dissension, by the man who was the instrument of conducting him thither, he was under an extraordinary influence of God. John Bennet having known something of his respect for Mrs. Grace Murray, and feeling it a duty to tone down his feelings by his attentions, seemed to cling to him like a person, who, after he had accomplished an object, was disposed to make reparation; and to cling the more, lest, while absent, some one should reach his ear and his heart, and affect them in a way the least to his advantage. Considering the whole of the case, few men besides himself could have been found, who would have so soon entered the society of a man from whom such injury had been received. But as *John Bennet* had *desired* him to take the journey, he would rather make any sacrifice than hazard even the *appearance* of improper feeling. This almost unexampled instance of magnanimity and forbearance, may be adduced by Mr. Southey as one among the many practical proofs of the correctness of his opinion, that "*Resentment* was a plant that *could never take root* in the heart of Wesley." And when-

\* See Wesleyan Meth. in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 78.

† Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. 1, p. 523; vol. 2, p. 161.



ever any circumstance of a hostile character turns up on the part of John Bennet, the reader must return hither, and look for the secret,—though he had by far the least reason to complain. Mr. Wesley continued to employ him in the work, and introduces him in the scene at Bolton, in the same way as any writer would introduce an important personage into a dramatic representation, whose presence was absolutely necessary for the perfection of the plot, and who was complimented for his services, just the same as though nothing had occurred to induce the one to break faith with the other. This is one view of this painful subject which has never yet appeared before the public; and it would place some persons in rather an awkward predicament, who have been in the habit of fastening upon some minor blemishes in the conduct of this great and good man—blemishes which have only existed in imagination, and which it would have been their felicity to have found in reality, to bring themselves to this test, and to see whether they could have summoned forth as much grace as would have enabled them to acquit themselves in an equally christian manner. The more his conduct is sifted, the more unmixed will appear the character of his piety. Mr. Moore, out of tenderness to Mr. Charles Wesley, observes, that “The high character of those concerned, forbids the imputation of any corrupt motive.” True, there might be no “*corrupt motive*,” while there might exist a *mistaken judgment*, and following which, a train of *groundless fears*. But the judgment in such case, and especially where the tenderest feelings—and perhaps the permanent peace of another are at stake, should be suspended. His motives might even have been *good*, since he judged it right to stop his erring brother, as he supposed, in his career of precipitate folly. But his conduct was wrong—as wrong as the conduct of the man who would stop a runaway steed, and seizing by the stirrup instead of the bridle, receives injury himself instead of accomplishing his purpose. It is impossible fully to exculpate Charles, though out of mercy to his brother—for it only snatched him from imaginary evil—evil which could not possibly exist in an union with a female of such sterling worth, to throw him into the fire by an union with another. The whole appears to have been a well-meant but ill-judged scheme of Charles’s—towards the slow accomplishment of which Mr. Whitfield was detained a day beyond his time in Newcastle—and the better to sanction it, as well as to prevent his standing alone in the offence, if such it should turn out, Mr. Whitfield was pre-



sent at the ceremony. If Mr. John had avowed his intentions to his brother, and not fully unfolded them to Mrs. M—, she was less culpable; but the delay alluded to, would indicate a difficulty in the preliminaries. But whatever may become of the others, the Head of the Methodist body—and it is to him the Methodists are to look, rose out of the whole like an angel of light.

Mr. Wesley's omission of Manchester was satisfactorily supplied by the Rev. George Whitfield, in whose letters several notices of the town and neighbourhood are to be found. In a letter to Captain W—, from Newcastle, dated Sept. 29, 1749, he remarks, "Since I last wrote to you, I have had many proofs that God's providence directed my way into Yorkshire. I preached four times at Abberford, four times at Leeds, and thrice at Haworth, where lives one Mr. G—" (Grimshaw). After introducing the same subject in a letter to Lady Huntingdon, dated Oct. 1, from the same place, he observes, "At Mr. G—'s, I believe there were above six thousand hearers. The sacramental occasion was most awful. At Leeds the congregation consisted of above 10,000. In the morning, at five, I was obliged to preach out of doors. I was invited to Leeds by one of Mr. W—'s (Wesley) preachers, and by all his people. The gospel was welcome to them. In my way hither I met Mr. Charles W—, (Wesley) who returned back with, and introduced me to the pulpit in Newcastle. As I am a debtor to all, and intend to be at the head of no party, I thought it my duty to comply. I have preached now, in their room, four times, and this morning I preached to many thousands in a large close. This evening I am to do the same again. The power of God has attended his own word, and there seems to be a quickening and stirring among the souls. To-morrow, God willing, we set out for Leeds."\*

Whatever might have been Mr. Whitfield's intention of leaving Newcastle the day after the date of his letter to the Countess, it is pretty certain he did not leave the town till the 3d of the month, on which day he was at the nuptial ceremony of John Bennet, and to attend which, as already stated, was probably the occasion of his protracted stay. His intention to return on the second, is repeated to Lady Fanny S—†, and the reason assigned by Dr. Gillies, for his not proceeding further north, was the lateness of the season.‡

In one of the letters referred to, the number of communicants at Haworth is computed to have been "above a thou-

\* Whitfield's Works, vol. 2, p. 282,3.

† Works, vol. 2, p. 284.

‡ Vol. 7, p. 182.

sand ;" and to the "six thousand hearers," he seems to have preached in the church-yard. The sacramental occasions were seasons of great festivity as well as solemnity ; persons resorted to Haworth at such times from twenty to thirty miles round the country ; and from the numbers that attended, there appears some ground for the truth of the report, which goes to state, that both the vestry and the inhabitants were on one occasion drained of wine. This would have been a fine subject for Mr. George White to have descanted upon, had there not been an unfortunate set off against it, in the smallness of the place, and the general poverty of the people, but few of whom could afford to keep the juice of the grape, and those who possessed it, being able only to preserve it in small quantities. Should the reported dearth ever have taken place, and only have extended to the vestry, it was as likely to have occurred on this occasion as any other, as it can scarcely be conceived that such an influx would enter into their calculations, and that provision should be made for the necessities of the case.

The feelings which the disputed points had excited between Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Wesley, among their separate followers, were now beginning to expend their strength ; and Mr. Whitfield seemed to exult in an invitation to preach, not only from "Mr. Wesley's Societies," but from "one of the preachers," the triumphant climax of which appeared to be — "Mr. Charles Wesley coming thither published me himself."

On Mr. Whitfield's return from the north, the first place in which he is to be found is, "Estwood in Lancashire," from whence he writes "To Lady F—— S——," and dates his letter, Oct. 25th. He seems generally to have set in with a full tide ; and though interrupted with an occasional surge, when the water was breaking around him, he was still to be seen swelling onward with the wave that bore him, and was never so far disconcerted as to be unable to attend to his usual arithmetical calculations of "crowds"—"multitudes"—"thousands"—and "tens of thousands," or to be prevented from placing the trumpet to his lips, and with a blast—which was far from being an "uncertain sound," pouring his notes into the ears of his friends, composed of lords and ladies, and other honourables, which again were heard echoing through the land and over the seas, and thus preserving others, with himself, on the move and in the bustle. But it too often resolved itself into present effect, and for want of system, the stirring qualities of his cause were doomed but a

short time to survive himself. Nevertheless, it *was* effect—and was *permanent* with the individual. “Since,” says he, addressing the above personage, “I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship from Newcastle, fresh wonders of grace and mercy have been shewn us daily. I have now, I think, preached about thirty times in Yorkshire, and above ten times in Cheshire and Lancashire. Congregations have been very large, and a solid, convincing, and comforting influence hath every where attended the word. In one or two places I have had a little rough treatment, but elsewhere all has been quiet, and many I hear are brought under concern about the welfare of their better part. At the importunity of many, I am now returning from Manchester (where I preached to many thousands) to Leeds; from thence I purpose going to Sheffield, and next week I hope to see good Lady H——n, at Ashby, and the week following I hope to be in London.——Mrs. G——, at Manchester, goes on well, and is not ashamed to confess Him, who I trust has called her out of darkness, and made her partaker of marvellous light. May the glorious Emmanuel add daily to the number of his honourable confessors, and give the rich to know, that to be rich in faith and good works is the only way to be rich indeed!”\*

He was at Halifax on the 25th, and in a letter from thence “To the Countess D——,” he observes, “Though I am jealous of myself, lest I should make too free with persons in high life, yet when I have good news to send concerning the kingdom of Jesus Christ, I am constrained as it were to write to your Ladyship. Will it not rejoice you very much, honoured Madam, to hear the glorious Emmanuel is riding on in the chariot of his gospel, from conquering to conquer? Every day people flock to hear the word, like doves to their windows. I have preached about thirty times in Yorkshire, and at the desire of many am returned thither again. The latter end of next week I hope to see good Lady H——. I suppose her Ladyship will detain me a few days at Ashby.——It is our privilege to go on from grace to grace, till grace be swallowed up in endless glory. O that your honored sister may march on with your Ladyship towards this blessed state! There she will have a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I send her Ladyship my most dutiful respects.”†

On his arrival at Leeds, he wrote “to Lady Hunting-

\* Works, vol. 2, p. 285.

† Works, vol. 2, p. 286.



don," the letter bearing date of the 30th. In this he remarks, "On Saturday evening I had the honour of your Ladyship's letter, and as it came before the Manchester post went out, I immediately sent the enclosed to Mrs. G——. If possible I am persuaded she will comply. She seems to be quite in earnest. I conversed for about two hours with the Captain and some other Officers, upon the nature and necessity of the new birth. He was affected, and I hope it was blessed. Since I left them, I have preached to many thousands at Rossendale, Aywood (probably Ewood) and Halifax."\*

The letters of this good man are not only extremely common-place, but possessed of great sameness, and remind the reader of the gentleman noticed in Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson, whose cheap mode of remark—in going repeatedly either over his own ground or that of others, is compared to a person making the best of his way home again in a return chaise at half-price. The object of the compilers appears to have been that of multiplicity rather than selection, through which, men, of whose intellects Mr. Whitfield possessed but a title, have been destined to suffer frequently in their literary reputation. The facts, however, whether repeated to a second, third, fourth, or fifth person, and published in the same volume, will always be interesting. A case unnoticed by him till December 19th, is worth recording.

He writes from London, to a Mr. N. of Glasgow; and it is probably owing to the circumstance of the sufferer being a countryman of his correspondents, that the subject is introduced at all. "It is now almost an age," says he, "since I wrote to you. Providence prevented my seeing you when last in the North, and ever since, business has kept me from writing! However, blessed be God, I can send you good news now I do write. For near three months I have preached in many places, and thousands and ten thousands flocked to hear the glorious gospel. I have since had repeated letters of the impressions abiding upon the heart of many. Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy free grace be all the glory! At Haworth I met with William Davy (Darney), who has since been imprisoned for preaching. Though he is seemingly unqualified, yet I meet with many that date their awakening from their first hearing him. What shall we say to these things? Even so, Father, for it seemeth good in thy sight! I think he belongs to our Lord's family; and therefore what is done for him, he will take as done to himself."†

\* Works, vol. 2, p. 287.

† Ibid. p. 306.



William Darney published an account of his imprisonment afterwards, and in that account, the magistrates and others concerned in the transaction, appear to have possessed but little of either justice or mercy,—a case not uncommon during the first steps of Methodism.

Before the effervescence had passed away occasioned by Mr. Whitfield's visits, and the people had settled down into something like solid feeling, Mr. Christopher Hopper arrived from the north of England. Mr. Hopper having been conversant with the work of God in these parts about this period, was often in the habit of supplying the information in his public discourses, which he omitted to insert in the sketch of his life; and this, to the junior preachers especially, was always interesting on public occasions. It was thus, that he addressed his auditories at Leeds and Halifax, in after life, as he had done at Manchester, in reference to the first preaching-room; and through the reminiscences of those who heard him in each place, a faithful picture is presented to the contemplative mind of the scenes which came under the observation of this humble, yet exalted traveller.

"The venerable Christopher Hopper," says Mr. Moore, "after many years of arduous labour, was preaching in Leeds, a few years after the death of Mr. Wesley. The Conference was then assembled at that place. The Chapels were full, and several Preachers were preaching abroad at the same time. He observed, 'Just fifty years ago I opened my commission in a Barber's shop in this town—the shop of William Shent. I had just as many hearers as the shop would contain. There the Lord sowed *the grain of mustard seed*! Behold what it has come to!' Great was our rejoicing in the Lord!"\* On leaving Leeds, at which place he had "spent a few days," he next proceeded to Birstal, where he preached "on the top of the hill, before the foundation of the Preaching-house was laid." From thence, he observes, in his journal, "I rode on to Halifax, and found their little Society at Skircoat-green. God gave us a blessing. I then rode to Rochdale and preached in the evening, at the widow Whittaker's, to as many as the house could contain. They were turbulent enough, but we were not afraid; for God was with us.†" Then follows his notice of Manchester, to which allusion has been made. After he had become Supernumerary, and while preaching in Halifax, he added two or three particulars which are worth preserving. "When I first rode into Halifax, I inquired whether there were any Methodists in the town, but I could

\* Life of Mr. Wesley, vol. 2, p. 17.

† Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 90.

not meet with any one for some time who could inform me. At length a person directed me to Abraham Kershaw's, of Skircoat-green, intimating, with apparent satisfaction, that there were no such characters in Halifax. I then rode on to Rochdale, a distance of 16 miles, before I could find another." He then added, with a little pleasantry, "I found Methodism in Rochdale, in a *cellar*, and in Manchester, I met with it in a *garret*," to which he might have appended, and in Leeds, in a *Barber's shop*—an introduction not a little odd in its associations.

The grant of money from the Haworth to the "Halifax Society," in the course of this year, as entered on the Haworth Society Book, would suppose a Society to have been already formed in the town. But the case seems to have been this, that the professors of Methodism in Halifax and Skircoat-green, being only a mile distant from each other, were blended in one—that the members were less numerous in the former than in the latter place, and were therefore less known and noticed by the populace—that, from the poverty of the members in Halifax, there was no one capable of entertaining the Preachers, in consequence of which, they were received by Mr. Abraham Kershaw of Skircoat-green, who, from his opulence and connexion with the Methodists, would naturally attract general attention—that, owing to the opposition with which Methodism met in the town, the private meetings were generally held at Skircoat-green—and that, from the town of Halifax being much better known than an insignificant place in its immediate vicinity, the Society more frequently received the name of the Halifax Society than that of Skircoat-green. By strangers at least, it would be more frequently identified with the town than the village: and not less than this is implied in the words of Mr. Hopper, when he says, "I rode on to Halifax and found *their* little Society at Skircoat-green."

Mr. James Kershaw, who entered the itinerant life in 1752, was related to Mr. Abraham Kershaw, and must have joined the society at no great distance from this period.

In the evening of the day on which Mr. Hopper entered Manchester, he preached in the celebrated "*garret*."

For the number of his auditors, the reader must turn to some of the earlier pages of this work. Small, however, as was the first congregation, he was not, even on a small scale, without encouraging prospects. "The congregation," says he, "multiplied every meeting. On the sabbath-day, the place would not contain them. The multitude was impatient to hear. The old wooden house shook under us, and put the congregation in confusion. Many trembled, and some

believed. The next evening they procured me an Anabaptist Meeting-house. The place was crowded. They heard with attention. Many were awakened, and joined themselves to seek and worship God.”\*

The slight discrepancy between the accounts of Thomas Berry and Mr. Hopper, relative to the *materials* of which the building was composed, the one stating it to have been built of *brick*, and the other characterizing it as a “*wooden house*,” may be reconciled on the supposition of its having been constructed partly of both; bricks having been employed for the purpose of filling the interstices between the timbers that formed the *frame* of the building: and none of the adjoining buildings having had the spaces filled up with the same material, it might be described as composed of brick in contradistinction to the others, while Mr. Hopper might have as naturally been led to the wood, from the fact of some of the principal beams of the frame-work having given way.

Report states, that some persons hostile to the Methodists, had contrived to saw one of the principal timbers upon which the floor rested nearly in two halves, and that the floor sunk considerably below its level. But this could not have been effected by others than the inmates of the dwelling, without detection; and the inmates themselves would never have done it; for supposing them to have contemplated their absence at the time of its intended downfall, they would not have been so inconsiderate as to have unhoused themselves in the cold month of November or December, and to have destroyed their household property. Besides, Mr. Hopper remarks, not that the floor *sunk*, but that “The *old wooden house shook*”—shook because of its *age*—its decayed timbers being unable to support the weight of a “*multiplied congregation*,” and a “*multitude impatient to hear*.” On the event of its fall, they must—since the building projected over the rock, have been precipitated from their giddy height into the river. They were beheld for the moment, poized, as it were, in air, for they could scarcely be said to have a foundation—at least, only such an one as was rocking beneath them. Like one of those avalanches,—those immense accumulations of ice and snow, balanced on the verge of the mountains of Switzerland in such subtle suspense, that, in the opinion of the natives, the tread of the traveller may bring them down in destruction upon him; so here, the spontaneous rush of a single person to the door, might have been the signal for

\* Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 91.



others, and one general crash had been the result. But a merciful Providence was at hand to furnish the Preacher with presence of mind, and to tranquilize the breasts of the people: and yet, what a moment of suspense! a moment in which time and eternity seemed to meet, and in which all the glorious or tremendous realities of each concentrated! Mr. Hopper requested them quietly to retire, suggesting that by so doing they might save their lives. The advice was taken, and not the least injury was sustained.

The Rev. John Collins, the nephew of the venerable Richard Barlow, states in a M. S. with which he furnished the writer of this history—and he had his knowledge from the fountain-head, that “The Members in Society at this time, chiefly consisted of elderly women.” To their firm and matronly example, such as were younger in years might, under God, be partially indebted for their preservation. The “young men” who took the room, would doubtlessly be present, and also Mr. Richard Barlow, who joined the Society in 1747, just after its formation. Among others was old Mrs. Hope, of Liverpool, still living, (1827) mother of Mrs. Byron, the former being then a child in her mother’s arms. When the reader considers that love of life which is natural to all, and which prompts to an immediate escape from danger, and when the mixed character of the hearers is superadded to such a principle—some of whom, as guilty sinners before God, had every thing to fear, in reference to a future state, the surprise will be, how they were preserved at all, not from the falling of the building—though that was sufficiently perilous, but how, even on the supposition of its stability, they were preserved from precipitate flight, and from crushing each other to death. Much less cause of alarm has produced the most afflictive consequences in Methodist chapels since that day,—and to *that* day—the day of its infancy, we must again return, and return at the same time, and in this particular case too, to the special providence of God for a solution.

Being now without a place of worship, and perhaps without the smallest prospect of any, their song of praise for deliverance might, in the mouths of others than themselves, have passed from a sprightly air to a solemn dirge. But opportunity was scarcely afforded, for the purpose of enabling them either to change the time or the key note. The very “*next evening*,” an “Anabaptist Meeting-house” was procured. This “Meeting-house” was a chapel near Withy-Grove, in the district called Cold-house; in which the Rev. — Winterbotham officiated. Mr. Hopper states the



Chapel to have been "*procured*," implying application; another account states Mr. Winterbotham to have volunteered the use of it, till another place could be obtained: but which ever way it was, it reflects high honour on the christian liberality of both the pastor and his flock, who could so far do violence to their feelings as to participate in the reproach of an infant sect, which was despised and persecuted both by rich and poor, by furnishing them with an asylum in their "day of trouble;"—and the *place* in which they were thus sheltered, and the *people* by whom they were thus countenanced—and countenanced too, in despite of the scoffs and violence of those around them, ought never, in the day of *necessity*—should they ever be permitted to see that day, to go unrequited and unblest by the members of the Manchester Methodist Society. With both the Methodists and Baptists, it must have been the day of small and feeble things; for the chapel, when visited Oct. 19th, 1826, and which was then rebuilding, did not appear so large as the one half of the Morning Chapel in Oldham-street, with a gallery only at one end of the building.

From the extensive range of country over which the Preachers then passed, it is likely that John Maddern, a native of Cornwall, who entered the work in 1742, extended his labours to Manchester in 1749. He is represented as exercising his ministry in Staffordshire at this period,\* and as yet, there was no title given to an immense extent of ground, besides that of "John Bennet's round," which comprised Chinley, in Derbyshire,—Macclesfield, in Cheshire,—Burslem, in Staffordshire,—Alpraham,—Chester,—Holywell, in Flintshire,—passing over the rising town of Liverpool,—onward to Whitehaven, in Cumberland,—and back to Bolton, in Lancashire, Manchester and Chinley, including many of the intermediate towns and villages.† The kingdom, it is true, appears divided into twenty circuits this year, in the Minutes,‡ in which Staffordshire is distinct; but many of the particulars assigned to this year in those records, belonged to subsequent periods,§ and this division of Circuits bears the character of one of them,—the thing itself implying too much *system* and *maturity* for this early stage of the work, as well as more *labourers* than can reasonably be supposed to have entered the field. Such labourers, however, as were actually employed, were for the major part

\* Atmore's Memorial, p. 247. † See Meth. in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 261. ‡ Vol. 1, p. 40.

‡ This is entered into at length, in Methodism in Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 207; also p. 83, 161.

of a genuine stamp, and John Maddern was one of them. His piety was unquestionable, and this, connected with sprightliness and zeal, rendered him acceptable to the people, as well as useful. His talents were such as entitled him to the appellation of a "good Preacher." The precise time and circumstances of his death are without memorial; but he is stated to have travelled "a few years," and to have "finished his course with joy."

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Messrs. E. Perronet and D. Taylor—Mr. Wesley's visit to Alpraham—Mr.*

*Richard Cawley's account of his own conversion—Address to a clergyman—Further account of the original Society at Bunbury and Alpraham, with notices of some of its members—Defences of the cause and doctrines espoused—Mr. Richard Cawley's public, domestic, and private character—Rules for the regulation of a family—Reproof—A letter to R. Davenport, Esq.—Mr. Thomas Hilditch—A detailed account of the causes which led to Mr. Cawley's invitation to Mr. Wesley.*

AMONG those who exercised the Christian Ministry in this neighbourhood, during 1749, were two persons, the initials of whose names are given by Mr. Wesley, on his late visit to Bolton; the one "Mr. P." who was as much disfigured by the rude hand of the mob, and as difficult to be recognised, as some of the papers which have been consulted for the composition of these pages have been to decipher, through coats of accumulated dust, so plentifully showered upon them by the hand of time; and the other "D—— T——," who engaged a part of the multitude "with smoother and softer words" than had been employed by previous speakers. Different circumstances go to prove, that the first of the persons referred to, was Mr. Edward Perronet. Previously to Mr. Wesley's visit to Bolton, he remarks, "I left all my company but Mr. Perronet at Hinley-Hill, and set out for Whitehaven."\* Accompanied by Mr. P. he proceeded from place to place, till he arrived at the town in question.

Edward was the brother of Charles, and the son of the venerable Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham. Both of the sons were itinerant preachers, and laboured in union with Mr. Wesley some years. Charles was particularly distinguished for strength of understanding, feebleness of consti-

\* Journal for 1749, p. 117.

tution, and a profound acquaintance with the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Edward, on the other hand, possessed of equal intellectual powers, could boast of a large fund of wit. Through the indulgence of the latter, which must ever be dangerous to those who do not live under the sacred and benevolent influences of the Spirit of God, he was led, not only by playful sallies, but occasionally by some of the keenest strokes, into various freedoms, which but ill became the sanctity of the ministerial character, and were not at all adapted to promote the sublime ends proposed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is to this talent, that "The Mitre" must be attributed—a Poem which is said to have been written by him, but the publication of which was suppressed through the influence of Mr. Wesley, because of the bitterness of its satire on the National Establishment;—it was this that led to his separation from Mr. Wesley, and to his residence at Canterbury, where he preached to a small congregation of Dissenters, and where, as Editor of a provincial newspaper, he availed himself of the privilege to which his office entitled him, of lampooning those whom he deemed the enthusiastic supporters of Church and State;—and it is to the free indulgence of this that many of his personal discomforts must be ascribed, as well as the tardiness of his pace in the path of practical and experimental religion. He appears to have had a strong relish for any thing powerful, severe, and personal, and to have enjoyed them at the expence of both good taste and christian charity. With these, his portfolio groaned, both as the production of his own pen, and from the pens of others.\* To proscribe wit, would be as rash

\* As specimens of the food in which his soul delighted, and a key to his intellectual character, the two following pieces, in his own hand writing, have been selected from his papers. The first is an extract, which he appears to have copied, with a view of increasing his stock of literary curiosities, and is entitled by him, "An Epitaph over a wicked Man's Tomb, —from the Northern Journey, by one Dr. WILD, a man as wild as his Name. Printed for the Booksellers in London, A. D. 1668, p. 46.

" Here lies the Carcase of a cursed Sinner,  
Doom'd to be roasted for the Devil's Dinner!  
Who, proud to think, the Dainty he had got,  
Fasted a fortnight at the very Thought:  
Then sitting down—(on either hand a Cup),  
He fell to work, and eat the Sinner up."

" N. B. At page 84 of this strange performance, is one entitled, 'The Loyal Nonconformist,' which, for wit, good sense, and truth, is worth all the rest of the Book put together." Written June 7, 1791.

The second piece is dated "Canty. Th. July 28. 1791," and is entitled, "The Downfall of Antichrist, in the Person of the Pope—Cardinals—Bishops—Catholic Priests—Impostors—and Mercenaries of the Church of Rome. See Revelation 18, 2.

" DOWN from his height shall he be hurl'd,  
All headlong to the flaming world:  
There the damned Ghosts shall fright him,  
And the Devils bark, and bite him.  
Spectre'd Demons shall appal him,  
And with iron mallets maul him;  
Ghastly Fiends shall yanking spurn him,



as the improper exercise of it is reprehensible\* but a great deal of prudence and forbearance are necessary, in order to its timing and direction; and from the dangers attendant on its employment, its possessors are more frequently objects of pity than of envy, and seldom fail to render themselves subjects of dread and of hatred. On Mr. Perronet leaving this neighbourhood, he seems at the same time to have left Mr. Wesley to pursue his route, and to have proceeded from hence to Sheffield, where he was labouring October 26th.†

The other person, of "smoother and softer words," was David Taylor. It is matter of doubt, whether, by "smoother and softer words," there is a reference to the mild character of his preaching, or his state of mind: and yet, unless he had been roused from the "*German stillness*" into which he had fallen, and of which Mr. Wesley had taken previous notice,‡ the conclusion would be in favour of the latter. Notwithstanding David's occasional fluctuations in zeal, he did a great and a good work in his day, and is entitled to high honour, as he nearly stood alone at the commencement of Methodism, in those places which were the more immediate scenes of his labours. He appears to have originally acted in the capacity of butler to Lady Betty Hastings,§ and

While the scorching torches burn him:  
There the Brimstone Lime-kilns melt him,  
And hot thunderbolts shall pelt him:  
Priests and Cardinals all grumbling,  
One and all together tumbling;—  
Friars, Monks, and Nuns attending,  
Over neck and heels descending;  
While a black sulphureous cloud  
Covers all the midnight crowd,  
Following their great Leader, where  
Dwells Perdition, and Despair,  
To the Pit, whence no returning,  
Ever broiling—ever burning!  
Such the State, and such the Doom,  
Of the MAN OF SIN and ROME!"

On the cover of this document, is written by another pen, "The supposed production of Mr. E. P.—C."

\* Mr. Wesley's father, in "An Epistle to a Friend, concerning Poetry," describes Wit thus:—

"As *Genius* is the *Strength*, be *WIT* defined  
The *Beauty*, and the *Harmony* of *Mind*:  
*Beauty's* proportion, *Air*, each lively *Grace*  
The *Soul* diffuses round the *Heav'nly Face*:  
'Tis *various*, yet 'tis *equal*, still the same  
In *Alpine Snows*, or *Ethiopian Flame*;  
While *glaring Colours* short liv'd *Grace* supply,  
Nor *Frost* nor *Sun* they bear, but *scorch* and *die*."

By another writer of the same age, it is said,—

"*Wit* is a *Radiant Spark* of *Heav'nly Fire*,  
Full of *Delight*, and worthy of *Desire*:  
Bright as the *Ruler* of the *Realms* of *Day*,  
Sun of the *Soul*, with in-born *Beauties* gay."

† Sketches of Wesleyan Meth. Sheffield, vol. 1, p. 80.

‡ Ibid. p. 23-45.

§ Ibid. p. 4.

afterwards to have entered the service of the Countess of Huntingdon, who warmly espoused the views of Messrs. Whitfield and Wesley, and exerted all the influence which her rank and fortune gave her, to promote their success.

“David,” it is said, “residing with her ladyship at Donnington Park, in Leicestershire, having himself tasted that the Lord was gracious, was occasionally employed under her sanction, in preaching in the neighbourhood. In these benevolent excursions, he visited, in 1741,\* Glenfield and Ratley, two villages near Leicester. Curiosity led many to hear this famous preacher, and his new doctrine; and amongst the rest, Mr. Samuel Deacon, of Ratley aforesaid, for many years pastor of the General Baptist Church at Barton. Being informed when at work in the field, that a person had been preaching in the street at Glenfield, and was going to preach again at Ratley, he laid his scythe down, and went to hear him. This sermon made a lasting impression on his mind, and induced him to search the Scriptures. The dissoluteness and ignorance of the Clergyman now struck him in a new light, and he began to reflect on his own danger, as part of the flock of so careless a shepherd. After much reasoning, reading, and perplexity, he was enabled to rely on Christ alone for salvation, and immediately found peace and joy in believing. About this time, the Countess of Huntingdon judging that David Taylor would be more useful as a preacher, if set at liberty from other engagements, dismissed him from her service. His visits became more and more frequent at Ratley and Glenfield, and several were awakened to a sense of divine things. In the following year, he was accompanied by Stephen Dixon, a fellow labourer; and their united exertions were blest with increasing success. Several of their followers attempted to teach, as well as they were able, the way of salvation to others. Two schoolmasters from Markfield, John Taylor and C. Clapham, were frequently employed in this good work at Ratley, to which village one of them removed, and formed a Society on the plan of the Methodists.

“It should be remarked, that David Taylor began to preach before the Wesleys came into these parts, and travelled through four counties every month, and was much followed; and as he did not meddle with disputed points, he

\* Wesleyan Meth. Sheffield. Where it appears he visited the neighbourhood of Sheffield in 1738: probably under the patronage, and through the support of her Ladyship, which removes in that work, vol. 1, p. 4, a difficulty relative to his situation and subsistence, for which, with the materials then possessed, it was impossible to account.

had quiet meetings, only striving to turn the wicked from the evil of their ways."\*

The initials of Mr. Perronet's name might be given, probably, because of its having been noticed in full by Mr. Wesley a short time before, where it would be easy for the reader to identify the same person; and David Taylor's might only be inserted in initials, from the circumstance of his not being fully united with the Methodist body. He nevertheless bestowed an occasional day's labour on the Wesleyan vineyard; and from the multiplicity of hands engaged in these parts at this period, it was not unreasonable to expect a more than usual crop of christian fruit.

In the account of Mr. Wesley's last visit, he is observed to have "Received a letter from Richard Cawley, of Alpraham, with an invitation from the Minister of Acton." Thither he proceeded from Bolton; and there, on this his first visit, he appears to have excited no small interest. "*Many*" of the persons with whom he met, and some of whom there is reason to believe constituted a part of the original Society which met in the vestry, were considered as bearing a close resemblance to the Society in "*Oxford*," of which he himself had been a member, having "*been long* exercising themselves to godliness in much the same manner." Of this Society at Alpraham, in its head, its progress, its views, its members, and some of the difficulties and conquests it had achieved, a more circumstantial account appears to be necessary. There is a peculiarity in the notice it receives from Mr. Wesley; and the papers which Mr. R. Cawley has left, will tend to throw light upon its character. Some notice has been already taken of its origin, and also of the character of Mr. Cawley; but of the former, there are some circumstances which yet remain untold, and of the conversion of the latter, no detailed account has been given.

Though Mr. Cawley was desirous both of doing and receiving good, when the first Society was formed, yet it was not till some time after its establishment, and possibly its dissolution, that he experienced the renewing power of divine grace. He was born in 1716, and was naturally of a hasty spirit. His own account of his conversion, in a letter to the clergyman of the parish, is as follows, left in M. S. by himself.

"Reverend Sir,

"As there is not any thing in the world gives me greater



satisfaction, nor tends more to my advantage, than to hear the uncorrupted gospel preached plainly, and applied closely, and especially by the ministers of that church of which I am an unworthy member; so, not any thing gives me more uneasiness than to find its light obscured, its beauty tarnished, its meaning and intention perverted, and each person left without his portion being divided to him, the whole remaining unapplied.

“Some time ago I gave you a testimony of my gratitude for your valuable sermon on ——. I now, though with the utmost reluctance, sit down to give you a proof of my honesty, on account of your sermon on, ‘Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.’ Though I have neither the wisdom to be, nor the folly to think myself infallible, yet I hope I have a little of the kindness of a friend; and not any thing but gratitude to God, good will to man, and the satisfaction of my own conscience, could have engaged me in this unpleasant task. What you advanced, is contrary not only to my own experience, but to the experience of persons of every denomination I have conversed with: and though I make neither the experience of my acquaintance, nor that of my own, the common standard of all, you will excuse my freedom, I trust, when I honestly tell you, that the metaphorical meaning which you give to the text, as well as to its connexion, is incorrect. It is the rock on which I struck, and through which I had nearly ruined my soul.—I would observe, however, that I have neither the inclination nor ability to contest the point with you; and I am too sensible of the evils that might result from such an attempt, whatever ability I might possess as a casuist, should each of us aim at victory, rather than truth and edification. Should you choose to pay me a visit, and condescend to converse with me on the subject in a friendly way, I shall esteem it a favour. Lest, however, you should decline that favour, I here give you an account of what God hath done for my soul, as a reason of the hope that is in me; and I must say, that I have endeavoured to do it with meekness and fear.

“What I was made at my baptism, I cannot tell; but ever since I can remember, my mind was alienated from the life of God, my will was opposed to the will of him that made me, and my affections were set upon things below. Although I was restrained, through the blessing of God and the care of my parents, from many scandalous sins;—though I said my prayers, and went regularly to Church,—though I loved learning and religious conversation,—though while a child,



as some of my neighbours can testify, I was the most able of any of my Schoolfellows to answer such catechetical questions as were proposed by our worthy old minister, and that too, before the congregation,—and though I was esteemed as a hopeful and well-disposed youth by all that knew me, yet I was an entire stranger to myself, and quite destitute of the knowledge and love of God. I had learnt to say, that by nature I was born in sin, and was a child of wrath; still I concluded that, in my baptism, I was made a child of grace. In short, I was so regardless of my soul, that I at length quite neglected prayer, even the form of words taught by my mother, till shame drove me to it again by means of my brother who was my bed-fellow.

“When about the age of 18 my mother advised me to go to the Lord’s Supper, with which advice I complied, and endeavoured to make myself as worthy as possible. This ordinance I believe I never omitted, except once, for the space of more than twenty years, during which time I made a conscience of keeping myself unspotted from the world. For many years I feared God for the same reason I feared the devil: yet all the time I abhorred the impiety of persons professing to know the Lord, while they in works denied him, and was ready to say to such, Stand thou by, for I am more holy than thee, concluding myself at the same time to be a tolerably good christian, because I beheld many others more wicked than myself. When about eight of these years had elapsed (1742), the Lord, in his abundant mercy, sent his Holy Spirit, which, though by a still small voice, was effectual in convincing me of sin. He had given me frequent warnings before: but it was only then, to allude to your beautiful simile, that I was sick indeed, and even raving. I was sound while insensible of my sickness—sick unto death, but not apprehensive of my danger. Till then, the physician’s skill only enflamed my disorder; or to explain myself more fully, I concluded I was sound, because I constantly attended on the means of grace.

“But I was now made deeply sensible of my danger. My mind being somewhat enlightened, I saw my darkness; and my conscience being awakened, I perceived the deformity of my whole soul, and the absolute necessity of a real change in my mind, will, and affections; for with all my former religion, when it was brought to the trial, I preferred earth to heaven, sensual to spiritual gratifications, and the friendship and favour of man to that which cometh from God. Thus was I captivated by the riches, honours and

pleasures of a delusive world, without once perceiving the value of the unsearchable riches of Christ. I had, previous to this, very little desire of that honour which cometh from above, and a very imperfect idea of the present and everlasting pleasures, which are the result of a well-grounded assurance of an interest in the favour and friendship of the Saviour. But he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, continued to shine into my heart, and shewed me, not only that I must be lost without him, but also persuaded and assured me that I might find all in him. At length I was prevailed upon, by the exceeding greatness of his power, cheerfully and gladly to forsake all for him. Then it was that I found him to be altogether lovely. My soul seemed as it were, to receive new powers and inclinations, and the Bible which, till then, was read like a task, appeared a new book. I was amazed that the public ordinances of God, replete with such strong and emphatic expressions, and adapted exactly to my case, had left my soul unimproved. From that time, to allude to your simile again, though I dare not yet say I am sound, I venture to date the joyful hour when the fever left me. And glory be to the Author of the change, it was not so dull a day as to be soon forgotten. Then I could say without hesitation, My Maker is my friend, my solace, and my joy. The joyful thought of being free from condemnation enabled me to bless the Author of the happiness of those whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin. Language cannot express the felicity I then felt. The fear of death which had held my soul in bondage, was removed, and I had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which I deemed far better. Nay, I experienced what I never expected, that his ways were pleasant, his paths peace, and his service perfect freedom. As I found no need, so neither had I any inclination for what are called innocent pleasures, though more properly carnal joys. I was conscious that I was born for better things, and that God was alone the chief, the all-sufficient good, the fountain of all felicity, and that no one besides himself could fill the capacious desires of the soul. It appeared to me to be beneath the dignity of an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, to stoop, or even to be delighted with any thing that had the least appearance of evil,—to do or encourage any thing that would not tend to promote the glory of God and the good of man. Thus was I brought to, and washed in

the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. The streams of that fountain still gladden my heart, and refresh my soul.

"Once changed, I neither wanted the wealth of the Indies, the pleasures of the world, nor the honour of man, being sensible of higher honour, of greater favour, and superior dignity. I was transported at the amazing condescension of the Most High, for raising and restoring a rebel and a slave to his favour. I cannot but reflect with the deepest self-abasement, how far every thing had been out of order in my soul. My mind had been enslaved with fleshly pleasures, blinded with false notions of good and evil, dead to all sense of the chief good, and deaf to the loudest calls and most pressing invitations of the gospel. Earth was above heaven, the beast domineered over the angel, the spirit stooped to the body, and passion had the mastery of reason, till God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, subjected the body to the soul, and the soul to himself. But observe, I was not *figuratively* renewed in the spirit of my mind. I felt in myself the workings of the Spirit of Christ, gradually producing such a mighty change, and so literally consistent with your text, as well as many others, that I hope I may at least be excused from taking such passages in a purely metaphorical light, without the implication of a renewal of nature; and also for speaking of that which I have experienced, especially as the meaning I affix to the text is so consistent with reason and Scripture, and your sense, to make the best of it, is so exceedingly dangerous. Before a change took place, I was carnal, but afterwards my obedience was the effect of love and filial fear. I was guided by a new rule, not by my own will, but by the word of God. Though ever conscious of my own unworthiness, it was my chief delight to walk worthy of God, and my only aim to promote his glory.—What may be the result of the present liberty, I know not, but I subscribe myself, Rev. Sir, dutifully,

Your's

R. C."

This argument drawn from internal sources, however satisfactory to Mr. Cawley's own mind, would fail to produce equal effects on the mind of a person who was a stranger to the work described. He was afterwards better skilled in controversy, and by resorting to another armoury for weapons, he was enabled to draw from thence such arguments as were adapted to the persons with whom he engaged in combat. To such as "know the love of Christ," the let-



ter will be read with interest; and not less so, that which follows, and which he entitles, "My Conversion continued."

"I was truly sensible that nothing but almighty power could preserve me, and was enabled earnestly to beg of God for divine assistance. I soon found the need of it, for in about a fortnight's time, when by myself in the fields, I had a violent assault. The enemy was permitted to take possession of my unguarded thoughts, and strongly to represent the pleasures of my darling sin to my luxurious imagination: and had not divine grace interfered, he had certainly overcome. The Lord enabled me to deliberate: 'Wilt thou presume to abuse my grace after such sacred communications, vows, and resolutions? Wilt thou return like the dog to his vomit, and the swine, which was washed, to its wallowing in the mire? Think of the impossibility, or at least of the difficulty of being renewed again, after having been once enlightened, if thou should'st fall away.' I further reflected; that my blessed Saviour was thus assaulted soon after his baptism, and tempted in a high degree, when in a solitary wilderness. Through that Saviour I was enabled to repel him, and say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' This conquest created in me such extatic feelings, that it seemed as if angels had come and ministered to me. I prostrated myself in gratitude before God, and fervently prayed to him for preventing and persevering grace; and he was graciously pleased to preserve me from such assaults again for upwards of one year and a half. I had grace then given, to induce me to seek every opportunity for private devotion; and when I first retired, I received a blessing to my soul, and received it not only with enflamed affections, but under a deep sense of my unworthiness. Yet all this while, I had but confused notions of Christ, and was not experimentally and feelingly sensible of what a great price he had paid to redeem me. During this season, I prayed twice or thrice a day, besides morning and evening, and filled up other vacancies with meditations and ejaculations.

"As I retired from company as much as possible, I began to feel my want of, and often wished for a spiritual companion. At length I heard that a member of Mr. Whitfield's Society was at Namptwich, and being informed of his character, I was strongly inclined to visit him, and concluded in my own mind so to do, having appointed the day. But other business prevented, and my father's affairs calling him that way, he himself went thither, and thus disappointed my wish. The person returned to London the next day. Though this scheme failed, the Lord, who knew my



design, did not leave me comfortless, but by a kind providence sent me on the same night, by the hand of my father, Bishop Beveridge's *Private Thoughts*. The book came from a person from whom I least expected any thing of the kind. It was a female, who either once saw me, or had heard I loved reading; but I think the former, when I had a short encounter with her about Mr. Whitfield's doctrines, which she either thought or heard were not orthodox, but which I endeavoured to defend. I gladly received the volume, and received it as from the Lord; and instantly retired, before I even opened it, into one of the out-buildings, to beg a blessing upon its perusal, praying that the Lord would enable me to discern between truth and error. My prayers were so earnest, that they produced both sweat and tears. I was in an agony to know the truth. On opening it, I found my prayers were answered, for till then I was not convinced of the sins of my duties, and consequently, not fully acquainted with myself. Every sentence produced a tear, secret ejaculations were made, thanksgivings were offered, and every article was an additional branch of my faith. I became more and more enlightened, confirmed, and comforted. I saw the imperfection of every duty, yet the abundant mercy of God in washing away the guilt of all my sins. It was my delight to be upon my knees in communion with him in prayer, pleading for the instruments of my conversion in particular, and for all orders and degrees of mankind.

"About this time, God was pleased to afflict me with a severe illness. But I desired death rather than life; and though the pains of the former were a terror to me, its sting was not. When friends came to see me, and wished my recovery, I thanked them for their kindness, without closing heartily in with their will, though without courage to tell them so. I was afraid almost of recovery, lest I should not have strength to persevere. I enjoyed a heaven upon earth, and sometimes, in my dreams, thought I was in the eternal state, joining the chorus of the skies with angels and redeemed saints. On one occasion, I felt sorry when I awoke, and found it but a dream.

"The Lord was pleased to restore me, and to shew me that the remainder of life was additional mercy, and ought to be spent to his glory. And though the devil was prevented from tempting me to actual sin, yet I found in my heart much remaining corruption, and sweet sleep was sometimes disturbed by dreams, in which the pleasures of sin were pre-

sented to my imagination. This was a great grief to me, and led me sometimes to doubt whether I were converted, though they were what I utterly abhorred. I prayed earnestly, and God answered, for I was sometimes awakened in the midst of them, when the malignant intruder appeared present. In about one year and quarter, I obtained gradual strength and conquest. Though sensible I am in a state of grace, I have enough to humble me, and convince me that I am in the field, and not out of danger."

Mr. Richard Cawley was probably one of the first who professed a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins; and his increasing light possibly led to the defection of the reading society from the vestry. This naturally placed him in the attitude of a defender and a head; and he appears acting on the defensive some time after its formation, in what he entitles, "An Answer to Mr. Lycet's arguments against Religious Societies," dated "August, 1745." He proceeds:

"Dear Friend,

"When I look upon myself as made, preserved, and governed by the Creator of the universe; when I consider my deplorable state by nature, the length of time that I was insensible of my condemned condition, my neglect of the one thing needful, my false hopes and groundless conclusions, the blindness of my mind as to the necessity of the new birth, and the destitute state in which I should have been had not the Lord opened my eyes; when I compare what I have with what I deserve, and that I have nothing but what I receive from God; and when I recollect that the fig-tree was cursed for not bearing fruit, and that the servant was condemned, not so much for wasting, as not improving his talent; when, I say, such reflections as these possess my mind, I cannot but blush at my backwardness and inadvertencies, and fear lest I should fall into condemnation for not improving the gifts with which I am entrusted, and for not suffering my light to shine before men, that they may see that I am not ashamed, as formerly I was, to profess myself a disciple of the blessed Jesus. Therefore it is, that I believe it to be my indispensable duty to use the talents which I may possess in vindication of his glory. You will excuse, I trust, my rustic style, which at most can only demonstrate, that I am neither rhetorician nor politician. My greatest knowledge is to know, that I know nothing as I ought, and that the knowledge after which I aspire is, savingly to know Christ Jesus. I am more conversant with

husbandry than divinity. But as I was present at the conference which you had with Mr. Thawley, at Acton, Sunday the 4th of August, and was nearly silent, I think it right to reveal my mind respecting such parts of the conversation as I can recollect, and hope you will put the most candid construction on what you may deem improper: and if there should be any thing worthy your approbation, I hope you will be humble enough to confess it. I heartily wish we all had more grace, knowledge, and humility.

“In the first place, when I reflect on your calling, I must confess you deserve the utmost commendation. You are engaged with the Shepherd of souls, in endeavouring to prevent schisms and causeless divisions in the Church, a work in which all true christians ought to engage. This you seem to suspect in reference to religious meetings, stating, as you did, ‘That the consequences may be bad.’ But this, it was replied, ‘Is only supposition.’ For my own part, I cannot help grieving to see how much religion is depressed, and how few there are that even retain the form of godliness. The great concern of life is but little regarded. It is evident to all, that evil communications corrupt good manners, and that every one converses on that in which he most delights. Here we cannot but lament to find the generality of those who call themselves christians, living in a neglect of the commands of Christ, and that too, among the most sober part of them. Their conduct is the very reverse of what it ought to be. The world, and the things of the world, seem to engage their supreme affections; and by their worldly, improper conversation, the Sabbath day not excepted, it is to be feared that their treasure is on earth. Though we live in a nation where the pure word of God is read and preached, there is reason to fear that the heathen will rise up in judgment against us. This inundation of impiety is, I conceive, owing to a want of examples of another kind, and also a want of a proper application of the word of God. I am persuaded that those who are the most vicious, are the most insensible of the effects of the word, and that nothing but saying, ‘Thou art the man,’ will produce any impression. It is almost impossible, that a minister of a very large flock, should be able to admonish every person privately. Therefore, I am bold to invert your supposition, and, on the contrary, inclined to suppose the consequences may be good, of persons associating for religious purposes. God is able to bring about great matters by small means; and I am not without hope, that, from such examples, and from the exhortations and encouragements



given, religion will be brought into greater respect, and those of us who are engaged may be the instruments of bringing our intimate friends to be more regardful of their better part. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that religious conversation will tend to stop, in some degree, the torrent of wickedness, and induce many who have their hearts set upon the things of the world, to place them on things above: and I cannot but think, the Sabbath evening may be spent as profitably, by a few of us stirring each other up to the practice of the precepts we may have heard, as in drinking or talking on worldly matters.

“I am not insensible, that dangers may arise from such associations; but I cannot see any evils so great arising out of them, as they are otherwise intended to prevent. If I see my neighbour drowning, it is certainly my duty to endeavour to rescue him from the water, though I may expose my own life to some danger by the act. The application is easy.—I would also observe, that civil society is improved and strengthened by contracting fresh intimacies, and by new correspondents; and may we not hope, that the same effects will follow in religion? In fact, instead of causing divisions, I think it is the likeliest way to create a closer union.

“As to your supposition, that persons by such means may become distracted, it appears altogether groundless; because the meetings are intended for the encouragement, and not the discouragement, of such persons as entertain a good hope through grace. With regard to others, they ought not to presume to enter into them; their case is dangerous; there are more lost through presumption than by despair. You will excuse my plainness; but if you maintain, that there is so much difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of the plainest truths of Scripture, and insist, as you appeared to do, that many of the texts are not properly translated, this, I am certain, is more likely to drive us to distraction than any measure we adopt. Alas! what will become of the generality of mankind, if such only can understand the Bible as are conversant with the original! I confess, that various constructions are, and may be put upon many passages of the Scripture, and that the simplest truths are controverted by some men; but I believe the most important things, connected with knowledge and practice, are so plain, that he that runs may read them, and that by prayer, meditation, and conversation, we may attain a complete knowledge of the word of God. If it be maintained, that we ought not to consult, or confer with one another concerning any thing contained in the



Scriptures, and that we cannot improve each other by so doing, but must still remain ignorant, which is equal to our maintaining the doctrine of the Church from which we have revolted, then I think it is great presumption for any individual to pretend to infallibility in any thing, when the argument must preponderate more against the one than the many. Scripture is the best interpreter of itself; and I deem it requisite that christians should freely communicate their views, and exhort each other while they have time.

“And now, Sir, allow me to ask you one or two questions. The first is, did you verily believe that it was the divine pleasure, that you should interrupt us? If you answer, ‘Yes,’ as I hope you can, I would ask secondly, whether you are as zealous and vigilant in suppressing those dissolute and disorderly meetings, which are so frequent in most parts, both in town and country? I trust, on enquiry, that I shall find it so; though such things are too often neglected, to the scandal of religion, and in contempt of our national laws. I am sorry that any person of knowledge and distinction should be so disingenuous to their Creator, as to encourage persevering sinners to take example of the thief upon the cross.—I heartily thank you for your cautions, and hope they will be exceedingly useful. Trusting you will pardon my neglect of answering you sooner, which has been occasioned by a want of time, I am, &c.

R. CAWLEY.”

In the commencement of the letter, Mr. Cawley is more devotional than argumentative, and displays the christian rather than the controversialist; but it is evidently with a view to enlighten and impress his opponent. It may be taken for granted, that, from the charge of “schism,” the persons who were accustomed to associate for religious purposes, had left the vestry prior to the date of the letter; and that though they met for religious purposes, yet their meetings had not assumed the proper tone and character of a Wesleyan class-meeting. They bore an immediate resemblance to the one which was established at Betley, near Namptwich, about the same period, in which the Scriptures were read, and read as much with a view to doctrine and practice, as the advancement of experimental religion, thus resolving themselves into meetings of discussion rather than experience. This character, it should seem, they continued in a great degree to retain, till Mr. Wesley visited Alpraham; and this may be one reason among others, for classing the members with those of the

Oxford Society. Nor is it at all surprising that this should be the case, though remotely connected with the Methodists. It was the plan upon which the members commenced their meetings;—established customs are not always willing to give place to those of a more modern date;—the old plan possessed attractions for gratification as well as profit;—the preachers, being few in number, could pay but partial attention to remote places;—and it appears to have been more the province of John Bennet, than the other preachers, to visit them, who was not remarkably distinguished for his attention to class-meetings. Their connexion, however, with Methodism, is indisputable. The very act of giving countenance to itinerant preachers, would be the signal, if not for their dismissal, for their departure from the vestry.

The young person, whose letters are supposed to have given rise to the Society, continued to retain her piety, and to preserve an occasional correspondence with Mr. Cawley. In a letter to her mother from Bath, whither the lady, with whom she now resided, had gone for the season, she observes, “I received your’s with equal surprise and pleasure,—surprise, because I really thought you had been called above. It has given me another opportunity of seeing my weakness, for if I had possessed true christian resignation, I should not have tormented myself with uncertainties. Why did I not deliver you up to Him, who will do all things well? I condemn myself, and yet weak nature will be heard. So distressing were my apprehensions, that I was nearly being confined to a sick-bed through them. I know you will be grieved with me: but if you would do any thing toward preserving an indifferent state of health, or to prevent an indifferent state from growing worse, you must be punctual in writing.—It affords me great pleasure to hear of your happiness. May the Most High continue it, and improve it, both in a temporal and a spiritual sense!—You inquire the reason of my removal to Bath? It is usual with my mistress, at this season, to be here, attended by her companion, her maid, her housekeeper, and a footman.—My health is much as usual, but I hope the change will be of service to me. If nature has at all designed a place peculiarly for pleasure, I should conclude this to be it. But though prospects are beautiful, the place, I assure you, does not take with me. Religion is at the lowest ebb, and vanity at its highest flow. There are three baths, each of which, I suppose, would hold a hundred people. The smoke is like the smoke of a furnace. When the water first boils, it is as hot as you can well bear.

your hands in it. The effects upon me for the first two or three times, were a drowsiness and a prodigious contraction in the forehead and face. The water promotes appetite, and I hope will be of service to me."

To Mr. Cawley, she remarks, after expressing her gratitude for his friendship, and referring to his illness, "Lately, I have been much in the wilderness. My distress was at first so great, that I was scarcely able to say any thing but 'Good Lord, deliver me.' I cannot, however, refrain from relating what appears to me to be a remarkable circumstance. In the midst of my conflict, I dropped into a small meeting-house, where was a gospel minister. He prayed to the Lord for one in my distressed state. His text was the lusting of Israel for food—their murmurings against the Lord and against Moses—and the Lord's displeasure with them. The preacher dwelt on the sore distraction in the camp of Israel, and applied it to the believer, in whose bosom it was also frequently found, on losing sight of God. Whatever might be the cause, unbelief would be sure to stare him in the face, saying, 'Shall I die here? Or can the Lord find sustenance in the wilderness?' He seeks but the Lord is gone. The enemy enters like a flood, and there appears no one to deliver: There is nothing in the world but contempt and folly, and nothing in the closet but confusion, distress, and anguish of spirit. The poor soul cries out, 'Help, Lord, or I am undone.' Such was my case, but the Lord did not suffer me to remain long in it. His promises are precious to me. He is my strength."

The name of this young person was Ann Smith. She afterwards became the wife of Dr. Whitehead, who wrote the Life of Mr. Wesley. She was now in the capacity of servant, and from an expression or two in her letter to Mr. Cawley, was not altogether agreeably circumstanced, owing, probably, to a want of religion in the family. "I find," says she, "this gay, delusive world, a sad enemy to my peace. I cannot help crying much to the Lord for deliverance from it. It would afford me great pleasure, if, in His providence, He would provide me a place among His people: but this, and every thing else, I endeavour to leave with Him. He is more to my soul than words can express." Such a female as this, ought not to go down to the dust without a record; and this notice of her, is only intended as a finger to point the stranger to her *monument*, for while a METHODIST SOCIETY exists in Alpraham, it will be seen towering to heaven to her honour. Her letters, as will be seen elsewhere, gave the first



impulse, dug the foundation, and laid the first stone;—Mr. Cawley gave it a form, and carried forward the superstructure;—and Mr. Wesley and his preachers following hard after, put a finishing hand to the work, as well as adorned it with a superscription.

Till the visit of Mr. Wesley the Society was approximating, by slow stages, to an evangelical state; and much had been done towards a general reformation of manners, domestic order, and personal devotions. Among Mr. Cawley's papers was a form of confession, supplication, and intercession, worthy of the Oxford Society in its purest and most rigid state; penned for private use, but possibly for the private use of every member of the Society at Alpraham. Mr. Cawley was not a man of many words; and though often called on to take up his pen in defence of truth, yet he was a lover of peace. He was regular in his attendance on all the means of grace, and equally attentive in the discharge of social and public duties. There was not a servant entered his service, ignorant of the letters that compose the English Alphabet, but whom he himself taught to read. He was appointed leader over the first class that was formed at Alpraham; and in all things, was a pattern of good works. On one side of a half sheet of foolscap, was printed, evidently for the purpose of nailing, or hanging up in some conspicuous part of the house, the following particulars; "*WE, and our House will serve the LORD. For GOD IS LOVE. THEREFORE our Earnest Request is, THAT every one who comes here will conform to our few RULES.*"

I. WE have no time given to throw away, but to improve for Eternity; therefore we can join in no Conversation that is unprofitable, but in that only which is good to the use of edifying, ministering grace to the Hearers. Therefore,

II. WE have nothing to say to the News of the Town, and of the Business of others: But we desire to hear of Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

III. NEITHER have we any thing to say to the Misconduct of Others; therefore, let not the fault of an absent person be mentioned, unless absolute Necessity require it, and then let it be with the greatest Tenderness, without dwelling upon it. May GOD preserve us from a censorious and criticising Spirit, so contrary to that of CHRIST.

IV. WE offer the right Hand of Fellowship to every one that cometh in the name of the LORD: But we receive not any to a doubtful Disputation: But whosoever loveth the LORD JESUS in Sincerity, the same is our BROTHER, and



SISTER, and MOTHER; for we cannot but remember that GOD is LOVE.

V. WE neither receive nor pay Visits on the LORD'S DAY, for we and our House desire particularly on that Day, to serve the LORD.

VI. WE do earnestly intreat every one to reprove us faithfully, whenever we deviate from any of these Rules, so shall we be as Guardian Angels to each other, and as a Holy mingled flame, ascend up before God." [Price One Penny.] Harvie, Print.

Both the spirit and phraseology of the above rules seem to bear the stamp of Mr. Wesley's mind; and if his, they might have found their way to Alpraham, through the medium of the preachers, before his own arrival. The families in which such rules were observed, must have resembled so many churches; and where they were suspended and not attended to, they must have been a standing rebuke to the inmates, as well as have afforded a christian stranger or acquaintance a suitable text and occasion for reproof, and instruction in righteousness.

The opposition which the Society sustained, more frequently arose from persons professing godliness than from the openly vicious. Mr. Cawley's situation in life shielded him from the violence of his inferiors, and his connexion with the Society was a protection to its members. His father too, Mr. Stephen Cawley, as appears from some family papers, was "High Constable;" and the general awe which civil authority inspires, would operate as an additional check upon such as might have it in their hearts to offer personal or other violence. To a person of some consequence, Mr. R. Cawley remarked, when preparing the way for an increase of religion:—

"It was observed by our young preacher, that the greatest enemy to our Christianity, is the licentious lives of our intimates and correspondents. It is my opinion, on the other hand, that there cannot be a greater motive to duty than examples of piety and virtue. We may fairly infer from what we see among those around us, that example is more powerful than argument. There are many belonging to our congregations, who, in addition to occasional attendance, are partakers of those things, which through divine mercy, may make them happy, but who are ashamed of their profession, and are so negligent of their duty as to lead lives worse than those of turks or infidels, and have nothing left them, except their voice and shape, to distinguish them from the brute

creation. Several conjectures may be formed respecting this deplorable case; but, to me, no one appears so probable as this, viz. their being afraid of being accounted singular, which exposes them to bad company, and a forgetfulness and utter disregard of God.

“With all submission, therefore, to your judgment, I think there can be no better method of encouragement to the discharge of duty, than the promotion of Religious Societies. These are of such a nature as to convince the world, not only that the members are not ashamed of their profession, but are really in earnest to be saved, and may lead, through divine assistance, to the conversion of the profane. I am persuaded that a Society of this nature will meet with but poor encouragement, since vice hath so many advocates and virtue so few friends; and that it will meet with the railleries and insults of the impious. But then, all their insolence will add to its lustre, and will make it appear in the eyes of considerate persons the more splendid. And as it is every person’s duty to promote the good of Society and the honour of his Creator, so it is our duty. We cannot be engaged in any thing of equal importance, or in any thing that may be of more general benefit to the parish.

“As you are not altogether a stranger to such an undertaking, I deem it proper to address you, as the first and only person of importance. I doubt not of your fidelity, and I shall be obliged by your advice, and for your impartial opinion in an affair of such moment. It hath been the subject of much thought with me, for a considerable time, though I have not as yet revealed it to any one. If you approve of it, my best and most earnest endeavours shall not be wanting in its promotion. I believe some of my intimate friends will be glad to subscribe to it.”

From the employment of the expressions “*subscribe to it*,” it should seem as though he had been contemplating a nearer approach to class-meeting, and that it was not a bare subscription of *name* to the Society, but a subscription of *pence* to the work. He expresses also the probability of receiving *raillery* and *insult*, a species of treatment to which they would be more exposed in their closer union with the Methodists, than when connected with the Establishment; and also of the *conversion* of the profane,—terms that connect better with a Methodist class-meeting than a Reading Society.

Mr. Cawley, like all other good men, was seldom long without occasions for the exercise of his zeal, fidelity, and patience; and it is of some importance to shew how far he

proceeded, as the representative of a Society so much resembling the one of which Mr. Wesley had previously been a member, and how far he surpassed many of more exalted privileges. His earnest solicitude for the welfare of those around him, entered into every relation and situation in life. In what he calls, "Advice to a Sister," dated "Michaelmas Day, 1747," there are to be found several important considerations, which may prove useful to others.

"SISTER—You were lately blaming my mother for her imprudence in not reasoning with you in a proper manner, as to the connexion you have formed. I confess, I agree with you; but if reason be not obliterated in yourself by passion and prejudice, the following considerations may, through the divine blessing, be of service to you. I am aware that what I am going to advise is certain to expose me to the odium of some, and the ridicule of others, if not the resentment of yourself and others of the family. But, Sister, I am more careful of your good than your favour, and more fearful of your danger than of your displeasure. Therefore it is, that I shall study to write as I think, and commit the event to God. Should you act improperly, it will be some alleviation to the trouble of my mind, to reflect that I endeavoured to prevent your ruin, and chalk you out the road to felicity.—I dare not take upon me to asperse the bitterest of my enemies with falsities, much more J. F. whom I once more declare, that I could greatly respect, if he were renewed in the spirit of his mind. Nor do I disapprove of him as some do, for the faults of his brothers. But, to say nothing of him myself, he is, if the reports of others be to be believed, a follower of the multitude: and to be plain, I have great reason to fear, that you yourself have only heard or read, but never experienced the great work; and consequently, though you may have the use of reason, yet your senses may not be exercised to discern what is truly good or evil. Persons in a natural state discern not the things of the Spirit. With respect to *Yourself*.

"1. Consider whether it will be more agreeable to make choice of a person, whose absence will always give you uneasiness, not only from the painful apprehensions that he is wasting his money, but from his being exposed to all the dangers resulting therefrom, as well as the hardships consequent upon yourself: or one who may give you continual joy, whether present or absent, from a conviction that he is improving his time and his talents—that he eats and drinks



to support nature—that he studies to please you—and that even the want of his conversation would be irksome.

“ 2. Whether you stay at home or go abroad, would you choose a person whose conversation was profitable and edifying, who would open to you the windows of his heart, and would gently admonish and warn you of any inconvenience and danger; or one who was vain, empty, and unprofitable, who mixed his words with oaths and curses, and who would acquaint you only with those affairs that could bear to be named?

“ 3. If there be a God that governs the earth, if there be a future state of rewards and punishments, and if all are the children of wrath, and exposed to eternal misery, till they are born again, I ask, is it not the highest wisdom to secure the one thing needful, and to consult, not barely how to please ourselves, but how to please that God who is able to save us from the wrath to come?

“ With respect to *God*:

“ 4. Whether is it more agreeable to His will that we please Him, and promote His interest in the earth, or that we gratify our worst enemy? Whether is it more proper, that we should be united to a true child of God, or a practical child of the devil? Would not the one endeavour to lead you, and all with whom he conversed, to the realms of light? And would there not be a danger of the other making both you and your's tenfold more the children of hell, by thoroughly furnishing you to every evil word and work? If you believe these things, would not you rather choose a person that would be a help than a hindrance to you in the great work of salvation—one that would be constantly endeavouring to serve God himself, and never better pleased than when all around him were doing the same—one that would carefully train up his children in the fear of the Lord, and convert his house into a little church—one that would not try to divert you with idle tales and profane songs, but who would indulge in useful discourse, reading, and in the songs of heaven.

“ With respect to *Others*.

“ 5. You are a professing christian, and like too many of us, have the name, though but little of the power of religion. Will it be any honour to God, for his enemies to have it in their power to say, ‘Your religion can stoop to impiety, or religion is but a name?’ Are you so bold as to risk your own happiness, to make another, as you may suppose, so? This is presumptuous. Are you willing it should be said of you, as, I think, you said, of M. S—m—, ‘You care for nothing but a for-



tune?" Alas! Can wealth give happiness? or money buy contentment? I believe her happiness in this world, ended with her marriage, and her ambition ended by an unexpected death. If there is much holiness, there will be much happiness; otherwise, marriage will be the beginning of misery. Alas!

'Gems, crowns, and captors, are but empty toys  
To souls created for eternal joys.'

"With respect to your *Children*.

"6. If these should be brought up in the knowledge and love of God, they will be the comfort of your future years, and you will be enabled to reflect with joy, that you have been the instrument of training them up as heirs of an incorruptible crown. On the other hand, will it not be a melancholy thought, to reflect, at the close of your days, that you have been promoting the designs of Satan, by bringing up children to be a constant torment to you through life, and then to be plunged into everlasting perdition?

"These are some of the considerations, which I believe to be of the utmost importance, and which are not only calculated to silence all other objections, but likely to promote present and future happiness. I have long thought of taking this freedom with you, but remained silent, from a fear that your engagement was too strong to be broken. Taking it for granted, as you complained of my mother not reasoning with you, that you are willing to hear reasons, I have declared my whole mind. I would neither advise you to do, nor dissuade you from any thing, but for your happiness. I have delivered my soul, whatever may be the result; and shall not fail to intercede with Him for you, who has the hearts of all in his own hands, that he may give you wisdom to choose and grace to secure the better part,—that he may bless you with love and gratitude to himself—that he may never permit his temporal mercies to be the means or inducements to your misery, by drawing you into a noisome maze—and that you may endeavour to devote yourself to his glory. Let the beauties and ornaments after which you seek, be those of a meek and quiet spirit. Seek for one who is possessed of an inheritance in heaven—one who is enriched with the unsearchable riches of Christ. May the Spirit of truth apply these words to your heart, 'Better is a little, with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith!' I can only reason with, and pray for you. I have placed before you life and death; O, that you may choose life, that you and your seed after you, may live for ever!"

He did not confine his efforts for usefulness to the members of his own family, but extended them to those who were "*without*." To an acquaintance, he writes,

"DEAR FRIEND—Excuse my boldness; but I was lately in your company, when I trembled to hear your irreverence, in the use you made of the name of Almighty God, though for want of courage and opportunity I suffered you to pass unreprieved. I consider myself unworthy to take His venerable name into my mouth, when upon my knees; but you, contrary to the laws both of God and man, can employ the most horrid oaths and execrations, and can call your Creator to witness the most trifling things, even absurdities, not omitting to make a jest of damning your fellow creatures to all eternity, and that too, in such a way, that if your prayers were answered, I fear there would scarcely be a person in the world saved. Indeed the commonness of the thing seems to extinguish the fear which should attend it, and both clergy and laity are indifferent to it. Some will even excuse it, by saying they cannot help it; but on the very same ground a thief might plead for pardon, because he could not help stealing. Let me tell you, that sincere and hearty repentance is necessary, and that without it, the blood of Christ will be unavailable to you. Be persuaded to reflect on your conduct; love and duty oblige me to use this freedom. You would account the man base, who should see your body and your goods in danger of being destroyed, and should not endeavour to prevent it. Neither can I think of any of my acquaintance being doomed to eternal flames, into which you must be plunged without a reformation, without warning them. With tears I will continue to intercede for you. O reject not this call, nor despise the instructions of the unworthiest of God's servants." &c.

This reproof was followed by an anonymous letter, to which Mr. Cawley, suspecting the proper person, replied. He was charged by the writer, with insulting his neighbour, and defaming his character. Mr. C. on the other hand, took guilt to himself for not having courage to administer public reproof; and stated that he was so tender of character, that he had even hazarded his own respectability, by frequently vindicating the cause of the insulted. Then turning upon his opponent, whom he knew to be exempt from gross vices, he remarked, "I fear that you yourself are in a more dangerous state than the person you defend, having the form but not the power of godliness—placing religion in a mere round of duties, attending the ordinances of the church, and in

giving alms to the poor. But men may do all this, and much more, and yet be lost. Without the satisfaction of Christ, duties cannot save us. We may waste the body to a skeleton, by fasting, and drown ourselves in penitential tears, and yet may as soon perish by repentance as by profaneness. Though prayer and obedience cannot save us, yet the neglect thereof will condemn us."

The person with whom Mr. Cawley had the most powerful contest, and for whose salvation he made a noble struggle, was Richard Davenport, Esq. of Calveley Hall.\* He had engaged the Esquire, as appears from a "Letter of Reproof," as early as "Jan. 5, 1746;" but the grand effort was made a short time prior to Mr. Wesley's visit to Alpraham. It is to this person that Mr. Wesley refers, though he makes no mention of the name, when he says, "A gentleman who had several years before heard me preach at Bath, sending to invite me to dinner, I had three or four hours' serious conversation with him. O who maketh me to differ? Every objection he made to the christian system has passed through my mind also: but God did not suffer them to rest there, or to remove me from the hope of the gospel." This affords a view of the principles of the person with whom he had to contend. As the letter was never published, and contains some useful remarks, as well as affords a glance at some of the characters which figured at the time, it is desirable to preserve a few extracts. It is dated, "Aug. 3, 1749."

"Sir,

"When I had the honour to dine with you, we had some discourse on the subject of religion. This was partly occasioned by my making so free as to oppose some of your propositions. I confess I know not how to acquit myself of the charge of arrogance, in any other way, especially as our Reverend Minister was present, than that of an appeal to the Searcher of hearts, who knows that I only have a single eye to his glory, and the good of my neighbour. The consideration of my inability, the want of ardent affection to my fellow creatures, and a consciousness of many infirmities, often betray me into a cowardly humility, and a sinful silence.. These were the occasions of a reluctant free-

\* E. D. Davenport, Esq. M. P. for Shaftsbury, eldest son of — Davenport, Esq. of Capesthorn, M. P. for Cheshire, is the great grandson of Richard Davenport, Esq. and resides at Calveley Hall. This gentleman, with as much benevolence as christian liberality, has his name entered in the Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday Schools of Bunbury and Alpraham, for 1827, as a Subscriber of two guineas. To this may be added the name of Admiral Telemache, as a Subscriber of five pounds; and the Rev. J. Egerton, Rector of Bunbury, as a Subscriber of one guinea.



dom; but the candid answers you gave, and the impartial manner in which you declared your sentiments, embolden me to testify my affection for you, by sending some of my own sentiments on the particulars then noticed; and I purpose treating you with the love, plainness, and simplicity of a christian; neither attempting panegyric on the one hand, nor satire on the other. It is a pleasure to have to observe, that you are endowed with many desirable qualities, as honour, justice, temperance, beneficence, liberality, compassion, impartiality, ingenuity, &c. together with a commendable zeal for the public good, wisdom by which that zeal has been directed, and an ample fortune, which cannot but attract the respect and veneration of your country. I have also heard high encomiums passed upon you for your knowledge in divinity, and am well assured that you have read excellent authors. With this before me, I have not, I assure you, the vanity to suppose that I can add to your information, though I certainly have the honesty to exhort you to make a close application. Pardon me, therefore, dear Sir, if I tell you that the one thing needful is still the one thing wanting.

“You will recollect, that I made some reply to what you said; but I expected Mr. Low to have said something more. The reasons why I did not enlarge were, first, a fear of lessening your esteem, and secondly, a want of presence of mind.

“Some of your expressions to Mr. Burrough were to this effect: ‘I would have young persons to take youthful liberties—not to be too grave—but still to be careful not to injure their constitutions.’ This I recommended, from what I deemed a nobler motive, viz. the fear, not only of hurting the body, but of ruining the soul. ‘It is time enough,’ you replied, ‘to think of the soul thirty or forty years hence, or after persons have entered the marriage state.’ I reminded you, that young people are exhorted to remember their Creator; and intimated, as an argument against delay, that there are many who neither attain the state proposed, nor yet the age mentioned. Your answer was, if I understood you correctly, ‘That the Supreme Being was so merciful, that he would never exclude any from bliss, who cried to him on the verge of life.’ I observed that I dared not to presume to set bounds to the infinite mercy of God, for I knew that it was greater than the heavens, otherwise monsters like myself had been past hope; but I insisted at the same time, of the necessity of our being guided by His



counsels, in order to be admitted into His glory; and endeavoured to expose the vanity of false hopes, to which, if I mistake not, you partly agreed, by stating it to be 'The safest way.'

"In reply to your remark to Mr. Burroughs, on 'The sweetness of sin,' I enlarged on the dreadful reckoning to be made for it at the last day. I am ready to conclude, however, with many more that heard you, that a person of your knowledge and ingenuity, could not be guilty of such gross mistakes in the articles of our holy religion, and that, consequently, you were either in jest, or only wished to know whether or not we were better informed. But still notwithstanding my wish to come to that conclusion, I believe *first*, That a person may acquire a large stock of head knowledge, may have a form of creeds, a mantle of ceremonies, a great part of the Bible by rote, and may be almost as orthodox as the devil, and yet be devoid of the power of godliness, and without the image of Christ: I believe, *secondly*, That it is frequently otherwise, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither indeed can he, because they are spiritually discerned: and therefore, fearing you might be in earnest, as one of these must be your case, I am resolved to treat you with impartiality. It is the love of Christ that constrains me to hazard your favour, in hope that I may prevent your danger. It is not your gold, but your good, that I want—not your silver, but your salvation."

He then proceeds to establish the doctrine of human depravity, to define the nature and enforce the necessity of repentance, by appeals to matter of fact and appropriate texts of Scripture; concluding his argument with, "To me, there appears nothing more plain than this—That either the nature of heaven must be altered, or the state of man must be changed: if otherwise, there must be one heaven for the drunkard, another for the sportsman, a third for the covetous, and a fourth for the extravagant; or, if such were admitted into the heaven of God, they would resemble the land-bird in water, and fishes in air."

"What you stated on the mercy of God, is correct to a certain extent. He has given the strongest proofs of it, in the most pathetic language. He declares that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezek. 33. 11. chap. 18, 23, 32; and therefore would have all men washed from their filthiness, that they may be saved. From the Scriptural description which I have given of repentance,

I infer that mercy is boundless only to such as fear and endeavour to serve and please God. But if I understood you, and you were really in earnest, this view of the subject is inconsistent with your apprehensions of it, which you endeavour to strengthen by the case of the thief upon the cross. Still, you cannot but acknowledge, that if I valued life, it would be the utmost folly in me to embark in a ship, certain of a wreck, in hope that I might be saved by a broken plank. The promises of God must be our refuge; our hope must be in his word: but these promises are for his children, which he describes, Psal. 1, 1, 2; 24; 34; 119, 1, 2. Matt. 5, from 3d to 12th; John 13, 17; James 1, 22, &c.

“As to what you advanced concerning the sweetness of sin, I know to be true; but it is sweet only when we are at enmity with God. Allow me, however, to ask a few questions. Is not sin diametrically opposed to the nature and love of God, and the good of man? Did it not turn angels into devils, Adam out of paradise, drown the old world, and reduce the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes? Would not his majesty suspect your loyalty, if he were to hear you speak of the pleasures of rebellion? And would not you yourself suspect your lady's fidelity, if you were to hear her talk of the pleasures of incontinency? Did not you, when you went last to London, entrust your husbandry, particularly the sowing of barley, to your coachman? a duty which, I believe, he faithfully and seasonably attended to. But suppose drinking, indolence, or any other vice or motive, to have induced him to neglect it; suppose I had gone as a friend to him, and to you, and had admonished him, if he valued either your favour or your service, to be faithful to his trust; and suppose him again to have returned for reply, ‘That you were so exceedingly good-natured a gentleman, that he was afraid of no evil consequences;’ and so neglected your business till your return. What, I ask, would be the result? I persuade myself, that notwithstanding all your good nature, he would forfeit both your respect and your service, especially when you heard of my kind admonition, and his disingenuous reply to it. Is not this a distant resemblance to the case between God and ourselves? Is not repentance the gift of God, and is not the time appointed for it by infinite wisdom, Now? If so, procrastination, in so dangerous a case, is the utmost folly, as well as the vilest disingenuity. If bodily disorders are soonest cured, when taken in time, why may it not be the same in spiritual things?

“As you are a gentleman of engaging qualifications, you cannot be insensible how much your example might influence your dependants. Being blessed with an ample fortune, and with unprejudiced neighbours, you might contribute considerably to their spiritual welfare. You might, if you were as zealous for our eternal as for our temporal interest, become the guardian of the defenceless, and be entitled to the encouraging promise in Dan. 12, 3. But I am heartily concerned that not only your servants, but some of your neighbours, seem to think it creditable to imitate some of your vices. Some others of your real friends—though I am not willing to credit evil reports, are concerned, from a belief that your last London journey has contributed, in many respects, to your disadvantage. But still, though backward to receive such things from others, I am not a little confirmed in those reports, from what I was sorry to hear from your own mouth. I am certain that this address might have been given by abler and more worthy instruments; but as the work is yet undone, you will excuse, I am sure, what is prompted by love, as well as extorted by a fear of being accessory to your ruin, in not endeavouring to prevent it. I hope to escape the charge of a rash judge, or a rigid censor; of which you will acquit me, if you will read Levit. 19, 17, compared with Gal. 6, 1; Heb. 3, 13; Matt. 18, 15, &c. I accuse you of no particular improprieties; this I leave with your own conscience.

“Now, Sir, if this be the case, let me press upon you, in the name of the Most High, for the sake of the love of Christ, the salvation of your own soul, as well as the salvation of others, to consider your ways, and turn to the Lord, that your happiness may not terminate with the present life. You are now past the meridian of life, and you may be summoned hence sooner than you are aware. I would fain meet you in heaven; delay no longer; get oil into your lamp; refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven; be not deceived; consider Psal. 50, 22. Time is swifter than a post; life is but a span—a bubble—a vapour. The night cometh, when no man can work. Hath not conscience often told you, that you were on the verge of destruction? It was the voice of God, warning you to flee from the wrath to come. Now is the day of salvation. How can you escape, if you neglect it? Read 2 Thess. 1, 7, 8, 9. Compare it with Matt. 25, from the 31, to the end; and be honest enough with your soul to make the application. Try your hopes by the Scriptures, lest you should be like the foolish builder in the gospel.



"I have now delivered my sentiments and my soul, and have aimed, not at your commendation but your conversion, not at your thanks but to engage your thoughts. Though I have endeavoured to point out the texts suitable to your case and to write as I could, though not as I would, I confess I have not so little of man in me as to be free from error, nor so much of the fool as to think it; yet I know, that the excellency of the power is of God, and hence it is, that I am not without hope of having to rejoice in your conversion, the glory of which shall be attributed to Him, to whom all glory is due. I have been more copious than I at first intended, and fear I have trespassed upon your patience; but as it is the longest, so I wish it may be the most useful letter ever written by

Your faithful friend,

RICHARD CAWLEY.

"P.S. I am so tender of your reputation, and so sensible of the painful effects which might result from my divulging this freedom, that I have disclosed it to none but God, yourself, and a friend in whose judgment I could confide, and for whose fidelity I dare answer: and to cut off suspicion, I send the letter by your worthy brother, who is ignorant of its contents, accompanied with my remarks on Mr. Law's book, which I am informed you are desirous to see. I cannot but say, that I have long wished for this opportunity, and was on former occasions pressed to it by some of your dependants, who would rejoice exceedingly to see you become A NEW CREATURE. I trust it will be received with the humility of a gentleman, and read with the candour of a christian."

The writings of Mr. Law, which had been read and circulated in the neighbourhood, appear to have occasioned a good deal of controversy, and to have unsettled the minds of some of the brotherhood; and what was worse, some of them indulged in amusements which wounded the spirit of Mr. Cawley. These things, amidst his constant efforts to spread the light and truth, occasioned him to mourn in secret. Turning from his own personal feelings and exertions, some opinion may be formed of the general state of the Society in Alpraham, from a letter written to him about ten months prior to the above.



“London, Oct. 3, 1748.

“DEAR FRIEND,

“I received a letter from you on the 26th of August, dated April 29th, through which I find you do not forget me. This gave me no small comfort, as I was uneasy on account of your seeming strangeness. But I dare not say, ‘Stand by thyself;’ if I did, shame might cover my face, and press down my Laodicean spirit.

“Your observations on Mr. Law’s writings (as to the spirit and life which run through them) are, I think, very just,—I mean as it regards the controverted points which you mention. Mine is but a poor pen to flee to for advice. But if we consider simply the word of God, much may be said in Mr. Law’s favour. On reflecting on the nature of our fall, from an heavenly to an earthly mind, it will appear necessary for every person possessed of an estate, to stand on tip toe, lest the weight of his earthly mind should plunge him into the middle of it, and he should thus be lost in the common wreck of nature. He that spake as never man spake, knew how hard it is for those that have riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He knew well what is in man, and no doubt uttered the awakening words to bring to our recollection what he had spoken by the mouth of one of his prophets long before, Micah 2. 10. ‘Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you even with a sore destruction.’ When we consider the practice of the primitive christians, Mr. Law’s assertions may be justified. However, I do not apprehend that Mr. Law, in any of his writings, exempts any person from being a christian, who has an estate, and does not literally sell it. But he is jealous lest they should make it their God, and so by trusting in vanity, vanity should be their everlasting recompence. I believe David shuddered when he found this evil. Do you not hear the sound of his voice? ‘My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken me as thou art wont.’ I would here call to my own, and to your recollection, what has been said by one of our own poets.

‘Give thy mind sea room; keep it wide of earth  
That gulph, that rock of souls immortal.’

“I am glad to hear our friend Davidson is recovered from his illness. I trust the Lord will make him an instrument of great good to many souls round about him. The ways of God are often mysterious to us in these cases—in the affliction of his children. But when we read that all things work for good to them that love God, we are constrained to

exclaim, 'How unsearchable are his judgments! and his ways past finding out!'

"I can truly say, I grieve with you, on account of those of your brethren, who have turned aside to lying vanities; especially to that in particular from which has proceeded so much mischief. It is thought, that going to see a Dance cost Jacob's daughter her honour; and it is evident it procured the beheading of John the Baptist. I pray God to shake them from their slumber, and make them in earnest for eternity!

"I am afraid the work of God here has been on the decline, owing to our lukewarmness and want of earnestness in prayer. We have not asked, and therefore have not received. O strange stupidity! I have often stood amazed at the long-suffering and mercy of God. He might well swear in his anger, that we shall not enter into his rest. But he has declared, that his mercy shall be set up for ever; his faithfulness will he establish in the very heavens. Continue, my dear friend, to pray for me, that I may not be as a withered branch in God's vineyard. Commend me also to the prayers of all the brethren. My respects to your father and mother, and all the family. I am your affectionate, though unworthy brother,

THOMAS HILDITCH.

"P. S. Mr. Whitfield is gone to Scotland, and is to return through Derbyshire; and possibly through Cheshire. Mr. Charles Wesley is in Ireland, and Mr. John is in the West of England. There is not any thing new published, except the second volume of Mr. Wesley's Sermons. I shall be glad to hear from you. Direct for me at Mr. Wagster's, Gravel Court, near the Salmon and Ball, upper end of Bunhill Row."

The familiarity with which the appellation "brethren" is employed, might be adduced in favour of the existence of a Society in Alraham, up to the date of this epistle; and the reference to "new" publications, would lead to a confirmation of the opinion already formed, of its having been a Reading Society. The works, as it should seem from a reference to Mr. Wesley's *Sermons*, were of a *Religious* character; and as Mr. Hilditch wished to be remembered in "The prayers of all the brethren," it is highly probable, that, notwithstanding the laxity of a few, who might have turned aside, in order to foot it at the dance, the Society was becoming more and more a decidedly Religious Society, uniting to the desire of improving the mind by reading, the improvement of the

heart by prayer. Mr. Hilditch himself appears to have been a member, and Davidson, whom he expected would be "An instrument of great good to many souls," seems to have acted in a public capacity. From a review of the whole, this Society will appear, in the course of its progress, to have combined in it the principles and peculiarities of singularity, self-denial, union, individual improvement, prayer, and general usefulness; all of which were distinctly marked in the "Godly Club," so called, at Oxford. And although it had not, till some years after its existence, been favoured with a personal visit, from either Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitfield, yet the members loved and affected to imitate these two good men, and embraced every opportunity in their letters and conversation to stimulate each other to greater exertion by a recollection of their zeal.

After Mr. Wesley had visited Alpraham, such were the effects produced, that Mr. Cawley had to write "An Appeal to the Church Wardens, and others of the inhabitants of the Parish of Bunbury," and to defend his conduct for having invited him to the place. He accosts them;

"My Friends,—for so I would fain call you, I am concerned to find, that any persons professing themselves members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, should consider themselves aggrieved at any thing done to promote the glory of God and the good of men; and no one could persuade me that you have not become apostates, were I not persuaded that you are entirely unacquainted with our designs and intentions in what we are doing, and also ignorant of the blessed effects of Mr. Wesley's preaching in different parts of England, as well as elsewhere. You may possibly consider him more fit for a prison than a pulpit; but in order, if possible, to make you better acquainted with the subject, I will inform you, in as plain a manner as I can, of my design in writing to him.

"When the spirit of God had opened my eyes, and turned me from darkness to light, from the power of sin and satan to himself, I could not but be heartily concerned to see that the generality of mankind were living as though there were neither God nor devil, running in the broad way that leads to destruction, while others were contenting themselves with only the form of godliness. There were a few exceptions. Therefore I introduced myself into the company of such persons as I had reason to believe were real christians, viz. such as had learnt to deny themselves of ungodliness and worldly lusts, and hoped to benefit by their advice and example, for



which I have great cause to praise God. Several of these persons, the most exemplary for piety, informed me, that Mr. Wesley had been instrumental in quickening them, and that, till they heard him, and others whom he got to assist him, they were dead in trespasses and in sins. Some of these persons were born and brought up in our neighbourhood, and were remarkably wicked in their younger years. They were much grieved to see their old companions led captive by the devil at his will, and wished that Mr. Wesley would visit these parts. Some of their relations seeing such a wonderful change, were desirous of the same. In consequence of this, several of them desired me to write for the favour of his labours. This I was the more inclined to, as I had read some of his writings, and was intimate with some of the Society. Being apprehensive, however, of objections and opposition from such as might know nothing of the intention of the thing, and were ready to believe all the malicious reports which satan is continually spreading to prevent the destruction of his kingdom, I deemed it proper to consult those whom I thought more proper to advise in such a case than myself. The result was,—That as many of our neighbours lived in the open violation of the laws of God, in swearing, sabbath breaking, drunkenness, lying, stealing, adultery, backbiting, and other notorious sins,—that as the Scriptures assured us that such as do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,—that as the common or regular preaching which we had, did not effect a reformation,—that as the impending judgments of God upon our cattle produced no serious effect,—that as both our temporal and eternal interests were at stake,—and that as there was only one way of escape, viz. by a speedy and hearty repentance, who could tell, but that God might bless the message of his servant, should he come among us, by turning many to righteousness? These considerations induced me to write a letter to Mr. Wesley, to favour us with a sermon when he came this way, and of whose coming I had little doubt, as I was assured that he was always ready to every good word and work. I was aware too, that he was a person against whom there could be no reasonable objection, being a man possessed of as much piety and learning as most men in England—a Fellow of Lincoln College—a member of the Established Church,—and one of the noblest defenders of her doctrines I ever read. The greatest objection I ever heard against him was, that of his being instant in season and out of season, and that of his preaching from house to house as well as in the



temple,—a charge, by the way, which was given to the first preachers of the gospel.

“When I wrote to Mr. Wesley, I received for answer, that he would be here on the 12th of October: but something happening to prevent his coming on that day, he sent another person to supply his place, that we might not be altogether disappointed. The person thus sent, preached in such an engaging manner, and with words so inviting, that I believe that most who heard him, were ready to praise God on his account. I must confess I never saw persons so affected before. This messenger informed us when we might expect Mr. Wesley. Pursuant to this, some of the parishioners had obtained permission of our minister for the use of the pulpit. I began to wonder, as several were inspired with good desires, that the prince of darkness did not muster his forces to prevent the weakening and subversion of his kingdom. My wonder ceased, for I was soon informed that some of the gentlemen of the parish had sent for our Reverend Minister, and persuaded him not to suffer Mr. Wesley to preach in the church; but that he might not be prevented from preaching in our house. Accordingly, he came, and as several desired it, ordered another person to come the ensuing week. I inquired in the interim, of several of the neighbours, whether they were of opinion that any good had been done, or was likely to result from it? They answered, that they saw a wonderful alteration in their workmen, and others, and begged that the favour might be continued. They further observed, that they were persuaded that it would be conducive to the glory of God, in the salvation of many souls, who, otherwise, without a miracle of grace, would be eternally lost, seeing that many came who never went to church, and others, who had the name but not the mind of Christ, were also brought under the word, and would be enabled to perceive, that the christian name is as ineffectual to salvation as the naming a ship the *Safeguard* or the *Good-speed* will preserve her from foundering. These are the plain reasons in favour of our late proceedings; and if you are concerned for the divine glory, the good of your fellow creatures, or for your own reputation, I would have you to deliberate on what you are doing, in offering to oppose these men, lest you should be found fighting against God. I trust you can say, in reference to what you have already done, that you acted from these views; that you were guided by pure christian zeal, in endeavouring to prevent what you thought would have a tendency to eclipse the honour of our

own Minister, as in the case of Joshua, noticed in Numb. 11, 28, and John, noticed in Luke 9, 49. But when you have properly learned the answers which were given by Moses and Jesus, you will probably be otherwise minded. You will allow that the ministers, in either case, who furnished the reply, were infallible: and I am not afraid to affirm that even a greater and a better minister than our own, rejoiced that Christ was preached, though from more unworthy motives than those which you can charge either upon us or Mr. Wesley. Read Phil. 1. 15, 16, 17, 18.

“There is but one objection of any weight, which religious characters, who know the whole affair, make to it, viz. ‘That several of the Preachers have not had human ordination.’ To this I reply, 1. Laymen are permitted to read, &c. in most of the Cathedrals in England; and these may be considered as the exemplars of others. 2. I cannot find that the Scriptures make ordination an absolutely necessary act. 3. It has been refused to many, who were as well qualified with learning and piety, as some who have received it,—and refused for no other reason than that they were the friends or converts of Mr. Wesley. 4. As it is frequently granted to persons unqualified and wicked, I consider it as extremely partial, and such men to be imposed upon us as a judgment rather than a mercy—from whom, may the Lord deliver us! 5. As these men no more pretend to assume the kingly than the priestly office, neither administering the Sacraments nor preaching in any consecrated place, but simply act from disinterested motives, warning men to flee from the wrath to come, and entreating them to be reconciled to God, and that not only by their public exhortations, but by a holy life and conversation, thus endeavouring to do good unto all men, I make no more scruple in hearing them, from a persuasion that they are sent out by God, if not by man, than either you or others may have in applying to an old woman for a cure, instead of a licenced surgeon or a regular doctor of physic; and I am not without my fears, that those who cannot endure that an unordained man should employ his utmost endeavours to save souls from hell, have as slender pretensions to humanity, as they have to the love of God and their neighbour. If your shepherd were to sleep, and the wolf in consequence were to devour your flock, or if your sheep were to starve, would you not be ready to blame even an indifferent person, who had an opportunity to save them, but neglected to interpose? and of how much greater value is the soul of a man, than the life of a beast?

“Far be it from me to encourage divisions or separations, or to give offence to any one; and I hope, before this, you are better informed. Should you not, we judge, that as the salvation of one soul is of greater value than the whole world, and as there is a probability in favour of their being the instruments of great good, both here and elsewhere, we ought to obey God rather than man. You will perceive, that I have put the most candid constructions upon your motives, and have supposed you—though some are of a very different opinion, to be influenced in your proceedings by a zeal for the glory of God and the good of man, and hope that your consciences can witness to the fact. But that neither of us may be deceived, allow me to propose a few questions, as so many touchstones, by which to try the case: and let me entreat you to charge your consciences to give the same answer now, which they will not be afraid to do, when brought to the bar of that God, before whom we shall all shortly have to appear. And, 1. Did you ever endeavour to prevent a swearing, drinking, and unintelligible minister from preaching? 2. Are neither you nor any of your families guilty of these and other vices, and would you rather be miserable yourselves, and have them eternally miserable, than be called to repentance by one of these laymen? 3. If we are wrong, please to inform us in that which is better, but do not imagine you can do it by clubs and staves. Why did the members of the Bunbury congregation not send a more worthy or more honourable ambassador than they did? Gentlemen, did you really intend to please and glorify God, by sending such a character to reform us? If so, why did you first equip him for hell? O, consider the dreadful threatening denounced against those who do evil, that good may come. Remember, and tremble, for their damnation is just. We are willing to hear Scripture or Reason, but are unwilling to listen to a person devoid of both: nor dare we take such as a guide to heaven, lest he should lead us direct to destruction.

“Pardon me for again reminding you, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; appear before Him, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secret thing is hid; who searches the heart, views, and intentions; and who will finally pronounce, ‘Come, ye Blessed,’ or ‘Depart, ye Cursed.’ The one or other of these sentences must be ours; and that we may all be saved from our sins, united to Christ, and not be sur-



prized by the midnight cry, is the hearty desire and prayer of your real Friend!"

From the circumstantial manner in which Mr. Wesley's visit is detailed, together with that of the person who supplied his place, it would almost lead to the conclusion, that it is from thence that the date must be carried for the introduction of Methodism into Alpraham: and this would have been the decided conviction of the writer, had not other incidental notices and collateral proofs, authorized a contrary opinion. The visits, however, previously to this, must have been extremely few in number, unobtrusive in their manner, and partial in their influence. Nor is it at all likely, that any of Mr. Wesley's preachers or followers, would attract equal notice with himself. All that had preceded, might be deemed as only a few visits from the outposts of an army; but now we are to contemplate the grand entrance, preceded by a special meeting of the most devout of the inhabitants, and occasioned by a special invitation, with the prospect of a permanent residence. Till now, there had probably been no formal, no public acknowledgment of an union, though an avowed readiness to meet every effort to promote the salvation of their neighbours; and till now, there had been nothing like regular preaching; but Mr. Wesley, yielding to the importunities of those who countenanced him, sent a preacher the *next week*, and thus established a Methodist ministry in the place. Incursions on territory and on liberty are frequently made, and as frequently endured, when there is an impression on the mind, that they will either soon terminate, will never be extended, or are so insignificant as to leave not only the title good, but the major part unimpaired. But when the invaded perceive one encroachment after another, and at length a strong hand laid upon the whole, it is not to be wondered that they should make a vigorous effort to secure their privileges, and rid themselves of the evil. This appears to have been the case in the present instance; and hence, "*clubs and staves*" were resorted to, as the last argument of a hitherto apparently suffering, but now enraged multitude. Mr. Cawley speaks too, of Mr. Wesley and his Preachers having been useful to persons "*born and brought up in the neighbourhood,*" and of an *intimacy* with some of the members of "*Society,*" before the formal invitation was sent from Alpraham: and his defence of an unordained ministry, would have been somewhat gratuitous, as coupled with Mr. Wesley's visit, if he had not had a partial eye to the past as well



as the future. From an employment of the words, "*our designs*," and "*our proceedings*," it may be taken for granted, that the Society which had so long existed in the place, went with Mr. Cawley to the fullest extent of his exertions on the occasion.

By a little attention to dates, it should seem that two letters had been written to Mr. Wesley, and that it was only the reception of the latter which he acknowledges in his Journals. Mr. Wesley was at Leeds on the 9th of October. It was from thence probably, that he wrote, in answer to the first, stating that he would be at Alpraham on the 12th. He observes, however, that, according to a prior engagement, he had altered his route for Newcastle. The next letter was received on the 19th, at Davyhulme; and appears to have been written for his further encouragement, occasioned by the flattering reception with which he was likely to meet, from the "Minister of Acton," who, in the interim, from a personal application made to him, had complied with the wish of some friends, to lend the use of his pulpit.

Mr. Wesley's remarks on the religious character of the people of Alpraham, must only be understood as applying to professors in general; of whom, he observes, "I found we were not now among publicans and sinners, but among those who awhile ago supposed 'They needed no repentance.'" From these he makes another selection, and remarks, in the quotation to which repeated allusion has been made, that "Many of them had been long 'exercising themselves to Godliness,' in much the same manner as we did at Oxford; but they were now thoroughly willing to renounce their own, and accept 'The righteousness which is of God by faith.'" Though many of the latter might be members of the praying and reading Society, there is no just reason to suppose that Mr. Wesley included Messrs. Cawley, Hilditch, and Davidson among them; for these seem to have had correct views of christian doctrine, as well as genuine piety of heart.

There is some reason to believe, that the person who supplied Mr. Wesley's lack of service on the 12th, was no other than Mr. Edward Perrenot, whom he very likely sent from Leeds, as he himself was about to depart for Newcastle, and who returned again from Alpraham to give him the meeting at Bolton. Mr. Wesley knew his man; and a preacher of more than ordinary address, and powers of mind, was necessary for the occasion, in order to blunt the keen edge of disappointment. From Mr. Cawley's account of him, it only redoubles the regret which is naturally felt, in reflect-

ing on the circumstances which led to his disunion with the body.\*

Mr. Hopper, who had spent a short time at Manchester, was not long before he perfected the work in Alpraham, which Mr. Wesley had advanced. "I rode through Cheshire," says he, "and joined a Society at Alpraham, and another at Pool. It was an humbling time among the opulent farmers: the murrain raging amongst their cattle. They buried them in the open fields. Their graves were a solemn scene. The hand of the Lord was on the land. I visited the suburbs of Chester. God begun a good work then, which has insreased and continued to this day."†

Thus has been beheld this interesting Society, in its rise, its progress, and its final and formal union with the Methodists. Abandoning the notion of a building, to which it has been compared, its members, in their history, will afford no distant resemblance to a little company of voyagers; at first, safely and comfortably harboured, so to speak, in the vestry,—next weighing anchor for the boundless ocean,—put, in a separation from the Establishment and by an abridgment of privilege, upon short allowance,—in occasional danger of springing a leak, and so foundering at sea, through the imprudence and improper conduct of some of the crew,—thwarted now and then by cross winds, blowing

\* Dr. A. Clarke, in the course of a conversation with the writer, communicated the following characteristic anecdote of him. He remarked, that Mr. Wesley had long been desirous of hearing Mr. E. Perronet preach, and that Mr. P. aware of it, was as resolutely determined he should not, and therefore studied to avoid every occasion that would lead to it. Mr. Wesley was preaching in London one evening, and seeing Mr. P. in the Chapel, published, without asking his consent, that he would preach there the next morning at five o'clock. Mr. P. had too much respect for the congregation, to disturb their peace by a public remonstrance, and too much respect for Mr. Wesley entirely to resist his bidding. The night passed over—Mr. P. ascended the pulpit, under an impression that Mr. W. would be secreted in some corner of the Chapel, if he did not shew himself publicly—and after singing and prayer, informed the congregation, That he appeared before them contrary to his own wish,—that he had never been once asked, much less his consent gained to preach—that he had done violence to his feelings to shew his respect to the publisher—and that now, that he had been compelled to occupy the place in which he stood, weak and inadequate as he was for the work assigned him, he would pledge himself to furnish them with the best sermon that ever had been delivered. Opening the Bible, he then proceeded, with the utmost gravity, and with great feeling, to read our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, which he concluded without a single word of his own, by way of note or comment. He closed the service with singing and prayer.—No imitator has been able to produce equal effect, and perhaps for this reason—the case is one, which, under similar circumstances, ought not to be imitated.

Even in his more serious moods, after wit had usurped a dominion over him, he indulged in singularity. A striking instance of this has been communicated by Mr. Pipe. Not long before Mr. Perronet's death, Mr. Pipe was walking in a public resort in Canterbury. Mr. Perronet was at a distance before him, and was walking, with considerable ministerial dignity, and measured steps, towards him. When he came up to him, he made a sudden pause, and putting his hand to his hat, accosted him with, "Your humble servant, Mr. Pipe;" then stretching out his arm, and pointing his fore finger in a direction so as to adapt the action to the language, he said, "Look inward—look onward—look upward;" and again putting his hand to his hat, added, "I wish you good morning Mr. Pipe," and passed on, with equal majesty and gravity, without another sentence. Mr. Pipe was young in the ministry,—it seemed as though one from the world of spirits had passed him, and told him to look into his heart, to contemplate the reward at the end of his work and of his race, and to turn his view upward to that God who was to support him through the whole.

† Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 91

from opposite quarters,—favoured at intervals with a supply of the genuine bread and water of life, by a preacher, who, like a passing vessel, was voyaging to another port,—invitations, like so many signals of distress, hoisted for the purpose of attracting attention and obtaining efficient aid,—still steering towards Wesleyanism, as the only haven they were anxious to enter,—and at length, under convoy of the venerable Hopper, towed in safety to the place where they would be, and fixed under proper moorings. Much had been done by others; and what they had done, was consummated by Mr. Hopper.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Continuation of an account of the work at Alpraham—John Nelson—Preaching in the open air—Persecution—Application made to R. Davenport, Esq. to expel the Methodists from the place—The applicants discountenanced—Mr. Wesley's conversation with R. Davenport, Esq. and its probable effects—Places for social meetings—Biographical Notices of different members of the Sim family—Providential deliverance—Spread of the work to Pool, Rushton, Duddon, and other places—Notices of Messrs. Smith, Gardiner, and Bayley.*

Mr. Hopper had scarcely left the place, when John Nelson made his appearance; who is stated, by the Rev. William Smith, in a memoir of Mr. Samuel Hitchen, to have "Taken Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim, of Alpraham, into the Methodist Society, in the Autumn of 1749."\*

Such was the concourse of people that assembled to hear preaching, that Mr. Stephen Cawley's house was unequal to their accommodation; in consequence of which, John Nelson took his stand beneath a pear-tree, from whence he addressed his auditors with his usual energy. It was the first time that field-preaching had been resorted to in the neighbourhood; and from the novelty of the circumstance, together with repeated visits to the spot, the persons who officiated, obtained, for a considerable length of time afterwards, the appellation of "Pear-Tree Preachers." This apparent outrage of public order—field preaching, was deemed a seasonable occasion for public disturbance; and those who were disposed for riot, were ready to conclude, that they could shield their own lawless conduct from punishment and disgrace, from the supposed illegality of such proceedings.

To render disturbance more secure, a sum of money

\* Meth. Mag. 1825, p. 722.



was collected, to the amount of twenty five shillings, for the purpose of purchasing liquor, in order to give to the most active part of the enraged populace; a case similar to that of Colne, and in which neither of the parties could boast of reason, since that monarch of the soul was obliged to be dethroned, before the passions, which ought to move in the capacity of subjects, could be brought into active operation. A person of the name of Thomas Loyd engaged to take the command, and as captain, to lead the seed of evil doers on to the attack. On approaching the scene of action, it was suggested to one of them, whose heart seemed to misgive him, that they had better apply to R. Davenport, Esq. of Calveley Hall, whose residence was only about half a mile distant, in order to obtain his suffrage, and, if possible, his approbation; of which they entertained no great doubt, from a knowledge of his principles. Thither they marched, with their champion at their head, who soon obtained an audience with the object of their pursuit, but who, in requesting permission to expel the Methodists from the parish, was accosted with, "No, Thomas,—by no means; lest they should be in the right, and we should be in the wrong. I would not have them persecuted for a hundred pounds, merely on the possibility of their being right." The captain returned a good deal dispirited; and on delivering his message, the multitude dispersed, without offering further molestation.

Notwithstanding Mr. Davenport's sentiments on the subject of religion, the reception which Loyd experienced, is just what might have been anticipated. Mr. D. had been so far influenced in Mr. Wesley's favour, from having heard him at Bath, as to solicit a personal interview with him; he was on such terms of intimacy with Mr. Cawley as to admit him to his table; and such were the previous drillings he had undergone, in consequence of Mr. Cawley's personal appeal, and Mr. Wesley's conversation during his visit, that he must have had too much light, and too many good feelings to sacrifice, to admit of his countenancing such hostile proceedings. The devotional part of the people, not to say the more rational, could scarcely have been considered worthy of censure, if they had professed to see the hand of providence in that kind of regular training which had been afforded, and which as gradually prepared Mr. D. for the part which he sustained, as if designed by the persons he favoured: and there is at least one, who blames them not, if they entertained an old fashioned notion, which has taken

possession of some minds,—That the man who is attentive to the movements of providence, will never want a providence to observe.

Of Mr. Cawley's letter, it is unnecessary to add any thing more; but still, it may prove an indulgence, to furnish a few of the particulars connected with Mr. Wesley's interview, of which he says so little himself, and yet in that little, so much to awaken curiosity. The case, as far as it can now be collected, is this: Mr. Davenport sent a special invitation to Mr. Wesley, the Rev. — Lowe, minister of the parish, and Mr. Stephen Cawley, to visit him. His principal object was, to acquire a more accurate knowledge of the doctrine of the New Birth than he possessed, and which was so much the subject of conversation. As a mark of respect to Mr. Lowe, who was not only the minister of the parish, but senior to Mr. Wesley, the subject was proposed to him. He indulged in considerable prolixity, and laid great stress on baptism. Mr. Wesley next took up the subject, and for the purpose of rendering himself not only more intelligible to an unenlightened mind, but more useful, preferred describing the New Birth rather from its effects, than in its nature. He commenced with "the natural man," whom he pourtrayed in several characters, and especially the man of the world, entering into his pursuits, desires, &c. While dwelling on the desire of riches, Mr. D. either by way of bravado, or from the native frankness of his nature, threw open his arms, and exclaimed, that he would aim at nothing short of the world, if he could obtain it. This, to Mr. Wesley, was only an attestation of the truth of what he had advanced, and he had too much acuteness not to perceive the ground on which it placed him; and having had one part of the position which he had taken rendered perfectly secure, he proceeded to shew that the man who experienced the New Birth, had his affections drawn away from earth, and fixed on things above; that his pursuits, his desires, his hopes, his fears, his joys, were all changed: and before he had completed, what he terms in his Journal, his "Three or four hours of serious conversation," Mr. D. began to feel some of those qualms coming over him, which, —making proper allowance for subject and character, Felix experienced when Paul was in his presence. Mr. D. turning to Mr. Stephen Cawley, inquired whether he had experienced the change spoken of? when he candidly replied in the affirmative. "Well," returned Mr. D. "if I should ever experience any thing of the kind, you will

be the first to whom I shall make it known:" adding, "I can comprehend Mr. Wesley on the subject, but I cannot well understand Mr. Lowe."

The conversation deepened in seriousness as they proceeded, and Mr. D. asked Mr. Wesley, whether he would visit him on his death bed, if time were allowed, and he should send for him? To which a suitable reply was returned. On their leaving, Mr. D. was anxious to send Mr. Wesley and Mr. S. Cawley, to the house of the latter, in his carriage, to which neither of them would accede. He then presented Mr. W. with a piece of gold, the value of thirty-six shillings, which he at first declined to accept: but on being repeatedly pressed to take it, Mr. D. supporting his wish by arguments drawn from the cause and charities which he (Mr. W.) had to support, as well as the expences and uncertainty of seasonable supplies in travelling, he received the boon. Mr. D. became more regular and serious after this; and it was when these better feelings were in operation, to which he found it impossible to do violence, that an application for the expulsion of the Methodists was made. Had Mr. D. followed up these hallowed impressions, he might have been rendered extensively useful. So long, however, as they continued, the Methodists experienced their beneficial effects; and he was never known at any time, to offer them the slightest opposition.

John Nelson, in order to promote regularity, and acquaint each preacher with the residence, and number of the members, ruled a sheet of paper, inserted the names, and gave them to Mr. R. Cawley, whose name stood at the head of the list, as the leader. To the company, therefore, which Mr. Hopper had collected, John Nelson added the necessary appendage of a *Class-paper*, without which, Methodism in its present state, knows nothing of a *Society*. Mr. Hopper's remarks are sufficient to authorize a belief, that he had taken down the names of all who were willing to enter into church fellowship with the body; but the social *check-book*, which has ever been found of importance, might have been designedly omitted by him, for the purpose of giving the persons interested a little time to reflect upon the engagement into which they had entered.

The place of meeting, after the original Society had left the vestry, was the house of a person of the name of Evans, who sustained the two-fold office of village-school-master, and parish clerk; and it is not improbable, that it was owing to his sustaining the latter character, that the



Society first obtained an introduction to the vestry. The members met several years in his house, in the afternoon or evening of every sabbath, at the close of church hours; among whom, in addition to those already named, were Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim, of Alpraham, and George Claven, of Bunbury. Mr. Evans now removed to Middlewich, where his mother resided, and the class was removed to Mr. Cawley's, where preaching was established, and where it continued for the space of about twelve months, when it was transferred to the house of Mr. Sim.

The Sim family resided at Bunbury towards the beginning of the seventeenth century, and were highly respectable agriculturists. It appears from the parish register, that Mary, the eldest daughter of John and Mary Sim, was baptized, April 15th, 1705. Soon after this, the parish was cursed with a drunken pastor, who added to the neglect of the flock, a neglect of the records; and for a space of twenty-five years, an afflictive blank is visible, in which neither baptisms, marriages, nor burials are registered. Hence the impossibility of ascertaining the ages of the other children, destined to adorn the christian profession. From Bunbury, they removed to a farm at Ebnor Bank, near Malpas. It was here that William, one of the children, was so singularly preserved from drowning. He went with his brother Ralph to bathe, but on proceeding beyond his depth, he sunk to the bottom of the water. Ralph being unable to render any assistance, immediately left him, and ran home to inform the family. At the moment the boy disappeared, a dog which was lying with composure upon a grass plat in the front of the house, a considerable distance from the water, was observed to spring up suddenly, and after giving a loud and affecting howl, leaped over some high pales, and ran away with the utmost speed of which it was capable. The actions of the animal surprized the spectators, and they had scarcely ceased to become the subjects of some strange sensations, when they saw Ralph running towards the house, and heard him crying out, "Billy is drowned! Billy is drowned!" They hastened instantly to the place; but before they had reached it, the dog had plunged into the water, and diving to the bottom, caught the boy by the head, and with equal gentleness and fidelity brought him safely to land. On the boy recovering, he told his friends, that while he was under water, he felt something coming towards him, and laid hold of it; but supposing it was his brother, and being afraid they should both be drowned, he ungrasped his hand,—and this



was it, apparently, which afforded the dog an opportunity of bringing him out of the water. This is one of those cases, which must either be rejected as altogether unworthy of credit, or must be admitted as a special providence; and there is no possible escape from the former, in the present instance, from the credibility of the witnesses.\*

The next remove of the family was to Calveley, in the parish of Bunbury; and it was while here, that the three brothers contracted an intimacy with Mr. Richard Cawley, who was afterwards united in marriage to Jane, their second sister. The last remove was to a farm in Alpraham, which Mr. Sim purchased in 1741. A note in the hand-writing of Mr. Cawley, shews that he was in the habit of taking religious counsel with Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim, as early as 1742.

William Sim, whose escape was so remarkable, and who was properly impressed with it, was religiously disposed from his youth, though he did not enter into the full enjoyment of gospel blessings till he became acquainted with the Methodists. He possessed considerable strength of mind, with great meekness and placidity, uniting, in no ordinary degree, the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. His authority over his household was as firm, and yet tender, as his demeanour before them was exemplary. In circumstances the most trying, he was never detected out of temper,—no mean evidence, by the way, of that “perfect love” of which he was the professed recipient. He connected with diligence in business, fervour of spirit, and maintained, while engaged in the world, communion with his God. On returning from the secular transactions of the day, he was not unfrequently found seated in the house in a state of perfect abstraction, insensible apparently of the servants or others who might be engaged in domestic duties, and then, after an interval of silence, would suddenly burst into song, as though heaven had come down to earth, mingling his vespers with the notes of the blessed. Richard Jackson,† now hoary in the ways of God, bears a noble testimony to the character of his old master, having gone in and out before him as a servant, the greater part of his active life: and servants, in giving unsolicited evidence, are generally more to be depended upon than relatives or professed friends. As the work of God continued to spread, labourers were demanded; and it was not long before Mr. William Sim was ap-

\* Meth. Mag. 1795, p. 355.

† Brother of the late Rev. Daniel Jackson, long a Preacher in the Wesleyan Connection.

appointed to meet a class at Tiverton, about two miles from Alraham, which he continued to lead, till compelled by the infirmities of declining years to relinquish his charge. He was always the friend of the poor, and liberal in the support of the cause which he espoused. Few men stood higher in the opinion and affection of Mr. Wesley. He was never married. He died as he had lived, in happy fellowship with God, April 1788.

Of Mr. Ralph Sim, who also lived in a state of celibacy, and who was remarkably distinguished for simplicity of manners, it might be said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." He finished his religious course in peace, June, 1792.—Mr. John Sim was no less distinguished for christian integrity than his brothers.—Miss Mary, the eldest sister, who was never married, and who, as she manifested a preference to it, obtained in after-life the title of Dame Sim, continued to the close of her pilgrimage a meek, uniform follower of her Divine Saviour. She died March, 1783, in the 78th year of her age.

After the removal of the preaching to Mr. Sim's, it continued there, with the exception of one summer, when the house was rebuilding, till Christmas 1823, when a place was taken for a Sunday School in the neighbourhood, by Mr. Hitchen,\* to which place it was deemed advisable to remove the congregation.

Alraham being now regularly supplied with preaching, as far as the number of labourers would admit, and affording a comfortable home for the Preachers, opportunities were furnished for visiting the adjacent places. Thus Chelmondston or Pool, Rushton, Duddon Heath, and Tarporley were successively visited and received the Preachers. At the latter place, about two miles and a half from Alraham, a commodious chapel was erected by subscription in 1791; and another was erected at Bunbury, in 1806.

Tattenhall was another of those early scenes of itinerant exertion, which amply remunerated the Preachers for the toil they bestowed; and Mr. Samuel Smith, who resided there on an estate of his own, was among the first-fruits. He was brought into early contact with the Methodists, through his marriage with Miss Elizabeth Sim; but his towering spirit disdained to stoop to the humiliations and exactions of Christianity, till, by associating with gay com-

\* Grandson of Mr. Samuel Smith, of Tattenhall, who married Miss Elizabeth, sister of Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sim.

pany, which involved him in heavy expences, he suffered a partial embarrassment in his temporal affairs. His prejudices acquired strength, not only from the native enmity of the human heart, but from a persuasion that the Preachers were the "False Prophets" spoken of in Scripture. He was at length induced to hear for himself, and the very first sermon proved the power of God to his salvation. He sought the Lord with strong cries and tears, received the remission of sins, united himself to the followers of Mr. Wesley, and became a successful and acceptable Local Preacher. Though he preached in most of the places round his own residence, to an extent of several miles, he did not confine himself to them, but visited distant parts. Having had two sons educated at Kingswood School, he was occasionally led thither, and preached in the neighbourhood with great success. In one of his excursions, he met with the Earl of Dartmouth, who was so enamoured with him, as to press him to seek and accept of ordination, promising in the event of his succeeding, to present him with a benefice. But no offers, however inviting, could ever allure him from the people among whom he had been called, and among whom he spent the remainder of his days. In evidence of the Earl's good feeling towards the father, one of the sons, yet living in Thames-street, London, obtained a situation under government through his influence.

As Mr. Smith was riding one day in company with Mr. Richard Gardner, of Tattenhall-Wood, the recent appearance of the Methodists became, among other topics, a subject of conversation. After a lengthened discussion upon the nature of true religion, and especially of an experimental knowledge of it in the heart, Mr. Smith observed, with great solemnity, and with a visible concern at the spiritual darkness and danger of his companion; "Mr. Gardner, you are blind!" "Nay," replied he, "I can see as well as you Mr. Smith!" The expression, however, was deeply impressed upon his heart. On his return home, he related to his wife the conversation which had passed; and from that time they both became seriously alarmed at their moral condition, and began with earnestness to inquire, what they must do to be saved? They were not at a loss where to seek that further help which their wants enforced; but, as they had been a considerable time on terms of intimacy with the Clergymen of the parish, who was vehemently opposed to the Methodists, they were prevented from attending their preaching, and from associating with them, through an unwillingness



to incur his displeasure. It was not long after this time that Mr. Gardner was taken ill of a fever, of which he died. During his illness he said to his wife; "If the Lord be pleased to raise me, from this sick bed, I will most certainly hear this despised and persecuted people for myself." But though he was not spared, his relatives had ground of hope, that he obtained repentance unto life. After his decease, his widow came to a determination, by the grace of God, to follow out the dying resolution of her husband. She accordingly began diligently to attend the preaching of the word by the Methodists, and took her children and her servants with her, that they also might hear the word of life. She soon received the truth, entertained the preachers in her house, and had the satisfaction of seeing all her children brought under the influence of true religion, and united in christian fellowship, in the same Society with herself. One of her children, Miss Elizabeth Gardner, was afterwards married to Mr. Williams, in whose children's children Methodism appears almost to have been hereditary; among whom may be noticed, Mrs. Morley, the late Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Roberts, Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Downes, of Manchester, and Mrs. A. Bealey, of Radcliffe Close,—the husbands of the three first ladies being Travelling Preachers.

Mr. Smith, who had been the instrumental cause of leading the female side of the house to connect themselves with Methodism, was also remotely useful to Mr. Williams. While the latter was yet a boy, his inquiries after true religion seem to have been considerably promoted by the following incident. Being one day in a smith's shop at Tattenhall, one of the neighbours asked him in a jeering manner, whether his father now went to pray dark prayers with Dr. Smith? This Dr. Smith, was Mr. Samuel Smith, the local preacher, whom Mr. Bruce, the neighbour in question, affected to despise for want of a classical education. The expression "dark prayers" excited his curiosity. On passing a cock-pit one day, he observed a great concourse of people surrounding it upon their knees, shouting forth their oaths and curses. Surely, thought he, *this* must be what Mr. Bruce meant by praying dark prayers. His father, by this circumstance, was furnished with an occasion of teaching him a lesson upon the subject of praying in the Holy Ghost, which he never forgot. Nor is it unworthy of recording, that much as Mr. Bruce had expressed his contempt of the religious labours of Mr. Smith, God was pleased to employ that very person as the instrument of his



conversion. For, on one occasion, when it was expected that Mr. Wesley was to preach in the neighbourhood, the brother of Mr. Bruce, who was a clergyman of the Church of England, prevailed upon him to go and hear for himself. He accordingly went, but instead of Mr. Wesley, who had been unavoidably prevented attending, Mr. Smith, the man he so much despised, was supplying his place. So powerfully, however, was his attention arrested by the sacred truths he delivered, and such was the conviction with which the Holy Spirit accompanied them to his heart, that from that very hour he earnestly sought salvation; nor was it long before he obtained a scriptural sense of peace with God, and became a most decided and useful christian.\*

Mr. Williams, who could give his boy a lecture on praying in the Holy Ghost, was one of those who prayed in the Spirit himself. He had been previously among the Presbyterians, and it was with extreme caution that he first ventured to hear the Methodists. Being, however, tolerably conversant with the word of God, and accustomed to hear the truth as taught by others, he deemed himself competent to detect any material errors in the doctrine of the new sect; and judged it unmanly to entertain a prejudice against them, without a fair hearing; especially, when he adverted to the ignorance and irreligion of those who were the most forward to condemn, and the readiest to persecute. The more he attended to the truths they delivered, and the more carefully he examined the sacred oracles to which they appealed, the deeper was his conviction of the accuracy of the doctrines they taught, and the necessity of an experimental knowledge of them. From a dubious and suspicious hearer, he became a steady adherent, and ready advocate of those, whom popular clamour had denominated the false prophets; and, regardless of the odium he might incur, he was among the first in Cheshire, to give his name as a member of the Methodist Society, and continued to be such to the end of life. So eager was he to avail himself of opportunities of religious improvement, that he frequently, after a hard day's labour, travelled fifteen or twenty miles to hear a sermon.

Another character who began to attend the Methodist ministry about this time, was Mr. James Bayley. The first preacher he heard, was John Nelson. In every place where preaching was established, for several miles round the neighbourhood in which he lived, he was sure to be present at the

\* Memoirs and select Letters of Mrs. Anne Warren, p. 8, 21.

hour appointed. No weather deterred him ; in the storm—in sunshine—in the street, the barn, the house—beneath the umbrageous foliage of a tree—surrounded by the mob—still he was there, to take his stand by the preacher, or to occupy a seat among the hearers. Even in his boyhood, and before he became a member of Society, such was the strength of his attachment to the Methodists, that, to employ his own language, he “ Was ready to fight for them.” He was not prompt in taking the *lead* in religious exercises, but he was always ready to *follow* such as he deemed more qualified for the work than himself ; and few excelled him in attempts to enlarge the Church of Christ, by personal applications to the vicious and the careless—pressing, importunately pressing them to attend a place of worship, and to give the utmost diligence to make their calling and election sure. He was in this, if not like the sun travelling in the greatness of his strength, or the moon in her brightness, a fair representation of the Star of Bethlehem, directing the inquirer and the stranger to the Saviour ; himself going “ before them,” and never pausing for any length of time, “ till *he* came and stood over where the young child was ;” when the persons thus conducted, have been known not only to have “ worshipped ” and “ opened their treasures,” but to have “ presented ” to the Lord what is infinitely more valuable than “ gold, and frankincense, and myrrh ”—the sacrifice of a “ broken and a contrite heart,”—and once accepted, have “ rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” Here it was, that he pre-eminently took the lead, however he might follow in public praise and prayer ; and whenever he succeeded in bringing a profligate sinner under the sound of the word, or a stray sheep into the fold, he returned home like the conqueror exulting in the triumphs of the field.—He was a genuine lover of his king, regular in the discharge of religious duties, equitable in all his dealings with his fellow-creatures, faithful as a friend, and affectionate in all the social relations of life. Such was the rheumatic affliction with which he was visited, that he was unable to support himself or go abroad for several years, without the aid of crutches. When enquiries were made respecting his health, his answer was frequently, “ Full of pain, but the Lord enables me to bear it.” A few days before his dissolution, he again replied to the interrogation of a friend, “ Full of pain—but not far from home—not far from Mount Sion.” He died January 23rd, 1827.

The manner in which James Bayley laid himself out

for the good of his neighbours, is worthy of imitation. It is one of those modes of christian usefulness, which takes its rise in the love of God, which seeks for indulgence in the good of man, and which requires a very moderate share of talent for its attainment. A person may in this way exercise his one talent, if not as splendidly, in many instances as usefully, as some ministers in the pulpit, much more highly gifted; and the same spirit that would cease to encourage, or attempt to repress efforts of usefulness in this way, would either seek to extinguish, or pass unheeded the beautiful emerald light of the glow-worm, beaming like a star of earth through the darkness of the night, because it did not equal the meridian splendour of the sun. The orb of day is only expected to communicate the light of which it is possessed; and the glow-worm is called to display no more. It is with christian ministers as it is with some large commercial houses in the metropolis; they commence on the wholesale plan, and may, under God, push their usefulness to almost any extent: but while the small retail-dealer is dependant upon these larger houses, they are also, to a certain extent, dependant upon him; and at no time is he prevented from transacting business with them according to the extent of his capital. The private christian too, whose abilities may be slender, and whose efforts may be narrowed by circumstances, may nevertheless be of essential service to the public ministry, and, in process of time, by successive efforts upon the individual, may realize an ample sum of good to man, nor less to himself, when he shall deliver up his one talent with usury, and when his Lord shall say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." It is lamentable to find christians acting, as though the conversion of sinners was a work sacred only to the public ministry; without ever once imagining, that on a more confined scale, a tremendous responsibility rests with themselves.

If the Saviour of the world, who went throughout all the cities and villages of Judea, that he might gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad, has left his followers an example that they should tread in his steps; and if he enforces his example by what amounts to a positive precept, declaring, "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad;" it must place those persons in as perilous a situation, who observe a neutrality in *usefulness*, as those who are neuter in *piety*. The *travels* of the Redeemer may be made to chime in with *itinerancy*, and may be considered



as not at all operating on those who are located by circumstances; but still, that localization, which providence itself has in all probability imposed, exonerates no one from the *object* of these travels—that of *gathering* souls into the Church of God. Had our Lord been addressing the Apostles in the words cited, both the *wanderings* and the *duty*, by way of personal convenience, might have been laid upon them: but he was addressing the *people* and the *pharisees*, which attaches a universality to the cautionary remarks, that will admit of no such restriction. “He”—no matter who, whether public teacher or private christian,—“*He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.*” If all the private members of the Methodist Society were as solicitous to *gather* with Christ as was James Bayley, instances of half occupied chapels and empty pews would be still more rare than they are.

The characters who have turned up in the course of inquiry, are only a few among the many that were brought to God in Cheshire, during the infancy of the work. Much is implied in Mr. Hopper’s words, in reference to his own visit, “God begun a good work *then*, which has increased and continued to this day.” This “good work” is still more circumstantially described in the Memoirs already noticed, as “A remarkable revival of religion, chiefly among young people,” when “many united themselves to the Methodist Society.”

Up to the close of 1749, it will be found in glancing over the scene which comes within the range of these pages, that in Lancashire and Cheshire in particular, several large towns remained unvisited by a Methodist Preacher; and that *places* as unimportant in history as they were insignificant in size and in population, generally received their first attention and their most zealous efforts. The truth is, neither Mr. Wesley nor the persons who acted under him, had any preconceived plan upon which to proceed, and professing to follow alone the openings of *providence*, they only—at least in a general way, entered into those doors, which the Divine Being, through the intervention of human agents, seemed to open: and as “The pillar of fire, and of the cloud,” led them in the way of the wilderness rather than that of the thickly populated city, thither they at first went, and there they remained till they were conducted to things higher.

Most of the *people* who received the Preachers, were *poor*; and the religion of Jesus, pent up in such mean abodes, seemed something like the sun through a dusky sky, assuming but



little of its native magnificence and splendour to mere eyes of flesh and blood. There were a few exceptions, but the bulk of them were at the utmost remove from affluent circumstances.

In attestation of the general poverty of the people, there was not, in the whole extent of country which this work professes to embrace, a single building erected by any Society, with a view to its sole appropriation as a *place of public worship*. The *Era* of "PREACHING HOUSES," as chapels were formerly called, did not commence in this part of the country till 1750; and therefore it is, that the first part of this work terminates with the close of the present year, as comprizing, in all the preceding periods, what may be emphatically denominated the *Era* of GARRETS and CELLARS; not that these were never afterwards resorted to, but because there was scarcely any other place,—except a barn, venerable for its age, which was capable of affording a contrast, and of which they could boast.

The men who had brought the work to its present state of prosperity and perfection, were for the most part *illiterate*, and among that class of people whom philosophers generally affect to despise. Thus whether we view places or persons, we are compelled to *stoop*, and in stooping, to bend the eye upon littlenesses: and yet these are evidences of the omnipotence of the work.

If man were left to himself, he would seek only to glitter in the city,—consider himself called upon, and so prepare accordingly, to prophecy to the wealthy,—instantly raise the stupendous fane to heaven,—and encircle himself with only the literati of the day. It is not thus, that the Supreme Being works. In creation, he commenced with inanimate matter, and advanced till he rose to his own image, in the sacred form of Man. In the institution of divine worship, he proceeded from the altar of turf in the open air to the tabernacle, and from the tabernacle to the temple. In conferring his blessings, he did not in the first instance distinguish a nation, but visited the individual—Abraham, from whom a nation was to proceed. If a selection was to be made, for men to preach the gospel, persons in obscure life were to be chosen. The persons to whom that gospel was first to be preached, were the poor;—the prophets in Herod's court, the saints in Cæsar's household, and the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia were to move on in the rear. There is an emphasis in these words, "from the *least*, even unto the *greatest*," which can only be properly felt,

when viewed in connexion with the other works of God—works which, while they *humble*, are calculated to *exalt*. The Divine Being discovers in a thousand ways, that his general plan is to *work upward*; and Methodism bears at least the divine character of beginning at the right end; and from this period, and onward, it will be perceived to be rising by certain progressive steps towards perfection, in the number, knowledge, piety, and usefulness of its disciples. But that for which *Methodism* was especially distinguished, as will be seen from all that precedes, and for which it has ever been distinguished, is, its peremptorily insisting on the necessity of not only a reformation of manners, but of the Conversion of the heart to God. The doctrine of the NEW BIRTH was as conspicuous on its form and as legible in its character, as the sign board of the tradesman, in the front of his building, to the gaze of the public.

“YE SEE YOUR CALLING, BRETHREN, HOW THAT NOT MANY WISE MEN AFTER THE FLESH, NOT MANY MIGHTY, NOT MANY NOBLE, ARE CALLED. BUT GOD HATH CHOSEN THE FOOLISH THINGS OF THE WORLD, TO CONFOUND THE WISE; AND GOD HATH CHOSEN THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD, TO CONFOUND THE THINGS WHICH ARE MIGHTY; AND BASE THINGS OF THE WORLD, AND THINGS WHICH ARE DESPISED, HATH GOD CHOSEN, YEA, AND THINGS WHICH ARE NOT, TO BRING TO NOUGHT THINGS THAT ARE; THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE.”

## END OF PART FIRST.

### ERRATA.

THE Reader is respectfully solicited to correct the following errata, to excuse others to which it may have been deemed unnecessary to direct attention, and for the existence of which, apologies of personal absence and other engagements can never atone.

Page 17 line 5 for Lancashire, read Lancaster.

— 19 }  
to } ..... Includes the transactions of 1743.  
— 28 }

— 29 }  
to } ..... Do. .... of 1744.  
— 32 }

— 20 — 15, 17 for Sims and Hitchens, read Sim and Hitchem.

— 30 — 5 for had, read has.

— 33 — 39 insert of, after loan.

— 40 — 36 for principal, read principle.

— 42 — 12 for persevering, read preserving.

— 47 — 22 for Longbridge, read Longridge.

— 128 — 20 for title, read tithe.

## APPENDIX.

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### 1743. PAGE 19.

WHAT was at most but problematical respecting Burkitt's Notes, when the passage was written, has since been rendered certain; for they were seen *in chains*, in Bunbury Church, by the Rev. William Smith, in the spring of the present year, 1827.

### 1749. PAGES 123-125.

During the progress of this part of the work through the press, the true state of the case between Mr. Charles Wesley and his brother John, in reference to Mrs. Grace Murray, has been communicated to the writer; and as the authority is indisputable, it is here presented to the reader. Mr. John Wesley wrote a letter to Mrs. Murray, but through some mishap forgot to direct it. Being put into the post-office, it was of course opened. On its being ascertained to be from Mr. Wesley, it was directed to him. Falling into the hand of Mr. Charles, who either did not observe the initial of the christian name, if it bore one, or had the privilege of opening his brother's letters, he broke the seal—read the contents—disapproved of the union—and immediately contrived to promote a union between Mrs. Murray and John Bennet. He urged on the marriage ceremony, and completed his purpose before he left Newcastle, and before his brother could possibly reach it. If Mr. Moore were acquainted with this, he was not without a reason for endeavouring to exculpate Mr. Charles, by employing the strong expression of "*corrupt motives*;" for it is only on the strength of the epithet that he can effect his escape. Many will go to the utmost length with Mr. M. in vindicating him against *corruption*, but few will exempt him from a rash, imprudent, meddling conduct in the affair. It was his place, if he disapproved of it, to have spoken to his brother, to have heard his reasons, and to have remonstrated with him. And for Mr. M. to defend Charles against the charge of "*corrupt motives*," when it was not so much his *motives* as his *conduct* that was called in question, is something like defending a man against murder, when he is only charged with defamation of character: consequently, however he may be acquitted of the one, the defence leaves the other untouched.

Published by the same Author.

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1. OBJECTIONS to the Doctrine of the Miraculous Conception, Examined and Refuted: being a Reply to a Sermon, entitled "Jesus of Nazareth the Son of Joseph." Preached on Christmas Day, 1808, by David Davies, at the Unitarian Chapel, Belper, Derbyshire. Price 2s. 8vo.

2. REMARKS on a Pamphlet, lately circulated in the Neighbourhood of Cawthorne; ironically entitled, "An Earnest and Affectionate Address to the People called Methodists:" In Six Letters to a Friend. 8vo. Price 1s.

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6. Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism, in Sheffield and its Vicinity. Vol. I. Price 7s. N. B. The second volume, which will complete the work, is in the Press.

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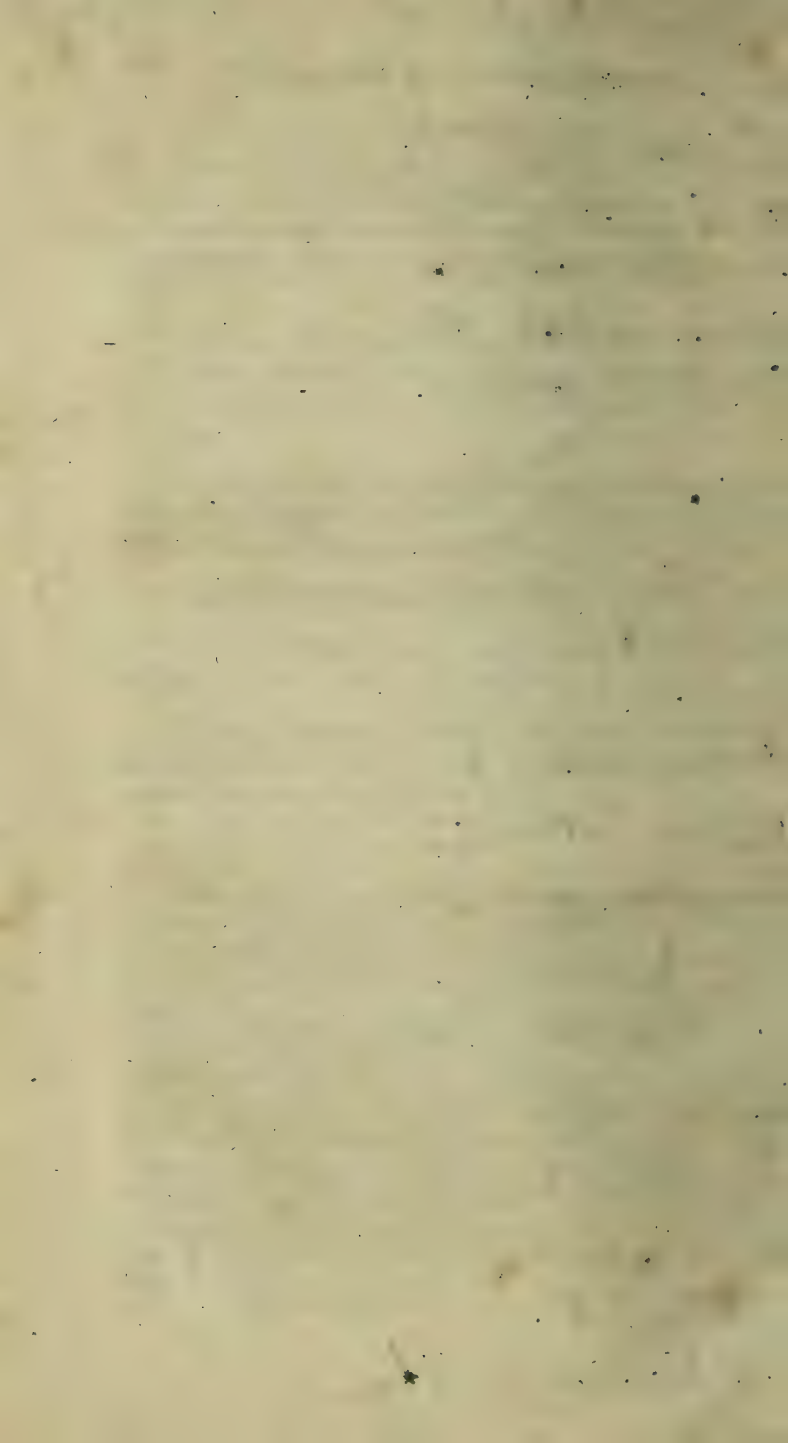
"Sketches like the present are quite new in Methodism. No regular work of the kind,—so limited in the scene, yet so varied and extended in the topics of its history; so circumstantial and minute, yet combining so much of what is truly spiritual and essential with what is secular and extrinsical,—is perhaps to be found in the records of any religious Body.—The present volume comprises seventeen chapters, which give the History of Methodism, chronologically, from its commencement in 1740 to 1771. In the Preface is contained a very ingenious summary, and easy method of compiling similar Sketches, for the instruction of those who may be inclined to engage in such undertakings. Among other private papers on the subject of religious experience, is a number of original letters from the pen of Mr. Wesley. The whole, we think, is executed in a spirited and pleasing manner, and with a talent and an industry which must obtain for the Author the gratitude and commendation of his readers. To his sensible and zealous writings the cause of Methodism has been frequently indebted; and, we trust, he will meet with encouragement to hasten the appearance of his second volume."



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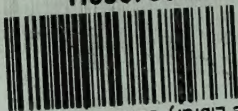








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